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LONDON ON THAMES

BY

G. H. BIRCH, R.S.A.



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OLD LONDON BRIDGE. *From a drawing by R. P. Bonington. British Museum.*

LONDON ON THAMES

IN BYGONE DAYS

By

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LONDON

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

IN COLOURS, ENGRAVED BY HENTSCHEL AND PRINTED BY EDMUND EVANS

- Old London Bridges. From a water-colour drawing by R. P. Bonington. *Frontispiece*
British Museum.
- New and Old London Bridge, From a water-colour drawing by G. B. Moore.
Gardner Collection 76
- Barge of King William IV. and Queen Adelaide at Somerset House.
From a coloured print after F. Calvert. Gardner Collection 80
- The Frost Fair of 1814. From a water-colour drawing. Gardner Collection 84

PRINTED IN MONOCHROME

- Head of a Bronze Statue of Hadrian, found in the bed of the Thames. British Museum.
- Old London Bridge. From the view of London by Visscher.
- Bankside and the Ruins of Winchester House. From an oil painting. Gardner Collection.
- The Tower of London. From a drawing by W. Hollar. British Museum.
- View from the top of Arundel House. From the engraving by W. Hollar.
- Savoy Palace. From a drawing by W. Hollar. Soane Museum.
- Water-gate of York House. From a drawing by Nash. Soane Museum.
- Whitehall, with the barge of William and Mary. From a print in the Crace Collection.
British Museum.
- Lambeth Palace. From a drawing by G. Shepherd. Soane Museum.
- Old Somerset House and Gardens. From an engraving after Knyff.
- Old Somerset House, with Old St. Paul's in the distance. From a drawing by T. Wyck.
Gardner Collection.
- Old Fishmongers' Hall. From a drawing in the Gardner Collection.
- The Custom House, designed by Sir Christopher Wren. From an engraving after Maurer.
- Gun Dock. From a drawing by T. Rowlandson. Gardner Collection.

- Stone Stairs, Ratcliffe. From a drawing by T. Emslie. Gardner Collection.
- The Turk's Head, Wapping. From a drawing by J. T. Wilson. Gardner Collection.
- The Old Swan at Chelsea, with the Race for Coat and Badge.
From a drawing by T. Rowlandson. British Museum.
- Thames Watermen. From a tinted etching by J. A. Atkinson. Gardner Collection.
- Old Somerset Stairs. From a drawing by Paul Sandby. Gardner Collection.
- The Red House, Battersea. From an oil painting. Gardner Collection.
- View through an arch of Westminster Bridge. From an engraving after Canaletto.
- Old Westminster Bridge. From an engraving after Samuel Scott.
- Old Blackfriars Bridge. From an engraving after J. Farrington, R.A.
- The Lord Mayor's Show at Westminster Bridge. From an engraving after David Roberts, R.A.
- The Half-Moon and the Ship, Shadwell. From a drawing by J. P. Emslie.
Gardner Collection.
- The Frost Fair of 1789. From a print.
- The Frost Fair of 1684. From a drawing by T. Wyck. British Museum.
- Billingsgate. From a drawing in the Gardner Collection.

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LONDON ON THAMES

CHAPTER I.

IM ROMAN AND SAXON TIMES.

Antiquity of the River's Name—Its Influence on Poets—Primæval Times—Llyn Din—Post-Pliocene Fauna—The Romans—The Walls—Timber Bridge—Retrospect—Tacitus—Roman Remains—The Bronze Head of Hadrian—Withdrawal of the Romans—Mists—Arrival of the Saxons—Alfred—Incursions of the Danes—The Bridge Barrier—Canute's Ditch—Edward the Confessor—Westminster Abbey and Palace—Aspect of the River and its Banks.

*"Oh! could I flow like thee and make thy stream
My great example, as it is my theme."—DENHAM.*

How one would like to recall, even dimly, some of the scenes which have been reflected in the bosom of the silver Thames, some of the many gorgeous pageants which have passed over its surface with "youth at the prow and pleasure at the helm," sweeping past the old city to the measured stroke of oars. The "silent highway" has re-echoed with the joyous shouts and merriment of many a joust and water tournament. Royal barges have passed from pleasant Greenwich to the Tower, or from Westminster and Whitehall to Richmond, Hampton Court, and Windsor; and many a sad and silent barge has conveyed State prisoners from their trial to their last prison, and landed them at the low-browed portal and the dank, wet steps of St. Thomas' Tower or Traitors' Gate. For the river has had its dark shadows as well as its brilliant lights, and many a State secret has been securely locked in its silent bosom.

But whatever fairy visions one would like to conjure up of all these bygone scenes, most of them are now as impalpable as the reflections they once cast upon its waters. Yet the veil which time has thrown over them can be lifted now and then when History comes to

our aid, and leaves us chronicles and records from Roman times to our own, sufficient to fill with interest these glimpses of the river as it flows through London.

Though London owed its origin, and in former days most of its prosperity, to the Thames, it has now in its enormous growth come to contain square miles of houses to whose inhabitants the river is of no utility, and who seldom even see it. It is, therefore, only a part of the Metropolis which can be called London on Thames, and it is with this part that the present monograph deals, setting forth in historic sequence the scenes which have been enacted on its stream, its banks and bridges, and the ever-varying aspect of those banks in the centuries through which the "best-loved of ocean's sons" has rolled on its course towards the sea.

Its very name of "Thames" has been the theme of legendary lore and poetic fancy. Spenser assumes that it was derived from the junction of the Thame with the Isis; but, alas! it was known by its present name, or "Tems," almost from its source, and figures as such on old charters and documents some centuries before the time of Spenser. The Romans called it Tamesis or Tamesa. Nor is it alone in the proud distinction of the name, for other rivers in England bear names with a suspicious similarity of sound, such as the Teme and Thame. Although the most important river in the United Kingdom, it is only the fourth in magnitude, the Humber and the Severn being the two largest, and the Shannon the third. But no other river but the Thames can claim to have been the inspiring theme of many a poet's lay, and to have had its praises sung by a Spenser, Pope, Denham, Thomson, or Gray; to have had its banks graced by eight royal palaces of sovereigns of all the dynasties which have successively swayed the sceptre of this realm, Saxon, Norman, Plantagenet, Tudor, Stuart, and Hanoverian; and last, but not least, to flow through the mightiest city of the civilised world. As Rome had its Tiber, and Thebes its Nile, so London has its Thames. These words of Pope were almost prophetic:

"The time shall come when, free as seas or wind,
Unbounded Thames shall flow for all mankind;
Whole nations enter with each swelling tide,
And seas but join the regions they divide."

When one looks at it now from Westminster, with its wharves and warehouses and moored barges on the right hand, and the white-stoned embankment and green belt of trees, only just faintly veiling the stately buildings on the left, sweeping in one magnificent curve "where two fair cities bend their ample bow," one's mind travels back to those primæval times when Llyn Din, "the City, or Fortress, of the Lake" crowned that eminence yonder on the left bank, and the tract which now comprises Battersea, Vauxhall, Lambeth, Walworth, Southwark, and Bermondsey was one vast marshy lake with sedges and reeds, the haunt of innumerable wild fowl, overflowed at every tide. The derivation of the word Llyn Din is at once apparent: the lake hemmed it in on the south. Then also the valley of the Fleet must have opposed a barrier on the west, for there is little doubt but that stream, which had degenerated in later times to a mere rivulet, must have been a considerable river, up which the tide flowed for some distance. How different then was the view; and how different again was that view from one countless ages before, in post-pliocene times.

The drift-gravel at Charing Cross has yielded up the bones of the mammoth, rhinoceros, cave lion, and Irish elk, the great red deer and two species of ox, the urus and longifrons. How strange must the aspect of this river have been then, if, indeed, it existed at that remote period. Fascinating as the subject may be, we must pass on to historic times, and take up the story of this noble stream when it first figures in records.

Passing by Herodotus, Aristotle, and Polybius, whose notices are but vague, we come to the period when the legions of Imperial Rome first extended their conquests to these remote shores: to the landing of Julius Cæsar in the year 54 B.C., the defeat of Cassivelaunus, the subsequent gradual subjugation under Aulus Plautius and Vespasian, and the final noble stand made by Caractacus. During that period nearly the whole of the South of England had been colonised by them, and London, called by them Londinium or Lundinium, had become an important town with walls and gates, the chief residence of merchants, whose ships were moored beneath its walls. The broad river then bore on its bosom the triremes and galleys and argosies, which, without waiting for a favourable wind, could be borne by the tide to its

wharves and quays. The revolt or rising of Boadicea led to the defeat of the Romans and the sack and burning of London, and for the first time the river in its rolling tide reflected the fiery glow of a burning city. But not for long did the city remain in ashes. Suetonius, the Roman General, defeated the Queen the same year, and she ended her life by poison. From that time, A.D. 61, Colonia Augusta, as Tacitus calls it, had peace and prosperity for nearly four centuries, and during that period the Romans considerably improved the navigation of the river. Dykes were built to protect the low-lying grounds, causeways were carried across them, and it was then that London saw its first bridge, which was of timber. The walls were extended and heightened and protected by semi-circular bastions at regular intervals, and these walls were continued along the river-side out of reach of the usual tides, the present Thames Street marking the site. Portions of this wall have been uncovered from time to time on the north side of the street. London must have contained some fine public buildings: the richness of the tessellated pavements and frequent discoveries of hypocausts show that for a provincial city it was not much behind Imperial Rome itself. What a busy scene there must have been along the shore: ships at anchor or beached beneath its walls, while slaves and sailors from all parts toiled at the unlading or lading of them.

It is by no means certain that in the first four centuries the city extended much further north than Cornhill, or further west than Dowgate, or to the east beyond the Tower, which from very early times had been a sort of fortress or citadel to protect the city on its south-eastern angle, although it did not develop into what we now call the Tower until long after. The subsequent extension of the city both northward and westward may have taken place during the Roman occupation, but, if so, quite at the last; it is much more probable that it was during the Saxon period, perhaps even as late as Alfred's reign. In those early times the site now covered by St. Paul's was certainly not included within the walls.

From the river the Roman city could never have possessed the picturesque appearance which it assumed in later days, especially in mediæval times. The walls would have been of stone, bonded every four feet by three courses of red tile or Roman brick, each sixteen by

twelve inches and one inch and a half thick. The stone used was that called Kentish Rag, which could easily be brought by barges up the river from Maidstone. The bastions were similar, and were probably carried up higher than the wall, so as to allow for a chamber, or watching loft, with loop-hole windows. The thickness of the wall, which was eight feet, allowed for a covered way nearly at the top, and connecting bastion with bastion. The foundation of this river-wall was on oaken piles driven into the earth, on which a mass of chalk rubble was placed. Originally there would only have been one gate, Bridge Gate, on this river-side, but later two or three more. The walls receded, and lined the natural haven known now as Queen-hythe. The gates would have taken the form particularly affected by the Romans, of two semi-circular arches with a pier between, and protected by square towers. Above these walls, and stretching up the rising ground to the north, could be seen the roofs of the houses, of rather a flat pitch, and covered with red pantiles, and here and there the portico and long roof of some public edifice or temple, especially more towards the northern boundary. The bridge was entirely of timber, and protected at its southern end by another gate and defences, forming what was called afterwards the South work or wark. And as the river glided past the stout timber piles it reflected the figures of the old citizens of the Roman city, passing and repassing : some wealthy ones, in their litters or on horseback, making their way to their farms or villas in pleasant Kent or Surrey ; while ever and anon the bridge vibrated to the tramp of marching legions on their way from the south to attack the hordes of barbarians in the more northerly parts of the island. The river must have swarmed with fish in those days, and we may picture it dotted with boats and with the coracles of the native Britons, in which fishermen are busy with nets and rods ; and as the sun goes down in the west the river lights up in a golden glory, only broken here and there by the dark boats on its luminous surface.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, tells us that London in his time was famous for its "concourse of merchants and for the abundance of its provisions," and that state of prosperity was due to the noble river on which it stood ; without the Thames, London could not have existed. With wealth came the civilising arts ; and the soil of

London and the bed of the river have yielded from time to time an abundant collection which gives no mean idea of its refinement. Some of the finest specimens of the Samian or red-glazed ware have been found here : bronze statuettes, brooches, fibulæ, glass, stone statues and bas-reliefs, superb tessellated pavements of great richness, extensive hypocausts, and many other outward signs of a population thoroughly conversant with the luxury of the far-off Imperial City.

A very beautiful head in bronze, evidently belonging to a colossal statue of the Emperor Hadrian, was dredged up from the river a little below Old London Bridge on the Southwark side, in the year 1837, and only narrowly escaped the melting-pot through the exertions of John Newman, F.S.A. The head exhibits many of those unmistakable characteristics of Hadrian so familiar to us from the many antique marble busts preserved in museums both at home and abroad. The expression of the features is thoughtful and self-reliant, the nose and brow straight, the mouth firmly set, and the lips well defined. The hair on the head is arranged in short stiff curls, and is without the usual laurel of the Roman Emperors ; the beard is full and slightly wavy, but is closely clipped ; the ears show signs of bad modelling, and these and several other imperfections in the casting would lead one to the opinion that it is of colonial workmanship. The eyes are pierced, and may have been filled with some kind of enamel ; the neck is full, and the head well set on it. The other parts of the statue have not been found, and may be now reposing in the river mud, which, as a rule, acts as a great preservative to bronze objects. Hadrian was well known to the citizens of London of that day, and carried his legions far north to subjugate the Picts and Scots, renewing and strengthening the wall originally built by Agricola from Carlisle to Wallsend. The existence of a bronze statue much larger than life-size in London is therefore easily accounted for ; but how this portion came to be in the Thames, close to where the old Roman timber bridge crossed it, and at what period it was thrown there, history does not tell. Pliny, speaking of statues, says : " There is not a good town within our province in which they have not begun already to adorn their market-places with many such ornaments of brazen statues and images." He also mentions one Zenodorus, an

artist in Gaul, who fabricated many works of great skill. Hadrian, in his visits to the remote parts of the Empire, erected temples and other structures in the chief cities, and gave bountifully to the poor of all the places he visited, so that he gained the honourable title of "Locupletator orbis terrarum;" and perhaps this very statue may have decorated some building erected by him in London, for he was here for some time.

During the period between the time of Hadrian and the withdrawal of the Roman legions, the old city by the river prospered and increased, and the later Emperors had ceased to look upon Britain as the Ultima Thule of their dominions. Eboracum, or York, slightly eclipsed London for a time, and it was at York that Constantius died. St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, is supposed by some to have been a British princess. Some time before this period a mighty change was silently at work. Christianity had been brought here in very early days of the Roman supremacy, and by the time of Constantine had made such progress that it had its bishops; one of whom, Restitutus, Bishop of London, attended the council at Arles. This early establishment of Christianity, although eclipsed for a time, until revived by St. Augustine's mission to the Saxons, made its mark on the old city on the Thames, and probably altered its appearance somewhat. The troubles nearer home which threatened Rome made it imperative that she should recall her scattered legions, and very soon the old bridge over the river echoed with the martial tread of the legions on their way to the south coast for embarkation.

The mists which have been slowly rising now veil the old city for a time from our view. We hear little of its vicissitudes, except the one broad fact that under the Saxon invasion the semi-civilised citizens, both Britons and the Roman colonists, were either destroyed or dispersed, and sought shelter in more inaccessible portions of the country, until the Saxons in their turn became more civilised, and, under Ethelbert and Sebert, received the mission from Rome, and, becoming converts to Christianity, were baptized by St. Augustine and his monks. But London, the old city with its walls and gates, could not have become the howling wilderness which some would have us suppose. Its trade must have revived and its houses must have been rebuilt, for at one

time St. Augustine thought of fixing the primacy here instead of at Canterbury, though considerations of policy prevailed and Canterbury was finally chosen.

But soon another enemy was to appear on the scene, and the Viking ships, under the dreaded ensign of the Black Raven, sailed up the river, and, unless bought off, spread ruin and destruction wherever they came. Alfred for a time successfully fought them, and during his beneficent reign London once more comes to the front as capital of the kingdom, her gates are rebuilt and her walls repaired and extended.

Did the old bridge survive all these changes of race and government? The answer to this is unquestionably in the affirmative; its upper stages may have been burnt, or otherwise destroyed, but the solid piles of oak and elm remained. In the year 994, Sweyn, King of Denmark, who was then besieging London, and had invested it closely both by land and water, was entirely repulsed by the citizens and by the army of Ethelred. William of Malmesbury says that part of the enemy were slain in battle and part were drowned in the river, because in their hasty rage they took no heed of the bridge. But a century previous to this, in the *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici* (Kemble's edition, Vol. I.), mention of a woman is made who, having been convicted of witchcraft in aiming at the life of a nobleman by the very harmless method of sticking pins into a waxen image, was put to death at London Bridge by drowning. This notice carries us back to the ninth century. The feat of bridging a deep tidal river was no difficult task for the Romans, as in some places they had greater difficulties to contend with in their bridge-building than they would have found here. But, in 1016, Canute, with a great navy, came up the river to London, and finding that his ships could not pass higher in consequence of the bridge, performed, according to tradition, a more extraordinary feat of engineering—if, indeed, it is true that he caused a trench to be dug through which his ships were towed to the west side of the bridge. Possibly he may have broken through the banks and dykes which kept the river from overflowing the marshes on the south side, and aided by a high tide have thus got his ships round, but the statement that he dug a canal from Rotherhithe to Battersea, as some writers would have us believe, and so diverted the course of the river, must be an exaggeration.

One can imagine the dismay of the Londoners "when Canute, the King, went sailing by." It should not, however, be forgotten that on the Southwark side, right away to Lambeth Marsh, there were still large pools of water, many of which existed even up to our own times. Earl Godwin is mentioned as having sailed his little fleet through the bridge, finding that it was not defended, when he was about to overawe his weak son-in-law, Edward the Confessor, at Westminster, which had become a royal residence.

Let us imagine the view of the river and its banks in his time, after the changes which the preceding years had wrought. The old city had extended westward and included the brow of the hill on which stood St. Paul's Cathedral, and had advanced down the hill almost to the Fleet River. Beyond this the ground rose and formed a crescent-shaped eminence, along the top of which ran a road, now Fleet Street and the Strand, following the course of the river to Westminster, beyond which again were marshes. The Abbey had been in existence for some time previous to this, and tradition ascribed its foundation on Thorney Island to Sebert. Afterwards enlarged and rebuilt by Offa, King of Mercia, pillaged and burnt by the Danes, it had led a very precarious existence until Edward the Confessor resolved to rebuild it on a most magnificent scale. Close to it, and almost connected with it, he erected his own palace. Thus came into existence that connection between the Abbey and our Sovereigns, which has been uninterrupted ever since, for the palace became the residence of each succeeding monarch, even to the reign of Elizabeth, when the Court finally removed to Whitehall.

Just one more retrospective glance at the old river and its surroundings as it glides on seawards through this wide, open valley, between the distant northern heights of Highgate and Hampstead, and those on the southern side, Dulwich and Sydenham. Facing the east we see on our right a wide, open extent of marshes, overgrown with rushes and reeds and frequent stagnant ponds and pools; a few roads, their courses marked by fringes of alders and willows, but of human habitations few or none; perhaps a few fishermen's cots, reed-thatched, along the bank, until the view is closed in the dim distance by Shooters Hill. On the left is the old city, safe behind its walls and gates, with the pre-Norman Cathedral of Erkenwald crowning the

height, and the wooden bridge spanning the stream, behind which, moored in the pool, can be discerned many a mast and pennon of galleys and ships from beyond seas, and nearer, the higher ground, with but few houses or habitations, and with tree-covered slopes down to the margin of the river. A church tower can be seen on the brow, that of St. Clement Danes, betokening a small settlement of these once dreaded scourges of our shores and rivers, the descendants of the Vikings. To this place they had been banished without the walls by Alfred, but the subsequent occupation of the throne by Sweyn and Canute, the latter ruling also over Norway and Denmark, ameliorated their condition. Two more Danish kings succeeded Harold and Hardicanute, before with Edward the Confessor the old Saxon line was restored. Besides the lowly tower of St. Clement's, there are others hardly discernible, but the churches of St. Dunstan, St. Bride, and perhaps St. Martin, are already there, and inside the walls many more can be seen.

Turning round and facing west, we see beyond the long acclivity, which gradually dies down, the central Norman tower of the Abbey and other towers marking the royal residence of the last of the Saxon kings, while on the other side are still the interminable marshes and lowlands far beyond Lambeth, Vauxhall, and Battersea; but the sun-lit river now takes another turn, and the distant view is closed by the low hills of Wandsworth and Wimbledon.

In the long struggles between Roman and Briton, Briton and Saxon, Saxon and Dane, many were the warriors who perished in its waters. One State secret it held and revealed. Harold Harefoot, the son of Canute, had been buried at Westminster, but his half-brother, Hardicanute, had caused the corpse to be exhumed, and the head severed from the body and cast with it into the river. The body was drawn up in the net of some Danish fishermen, and secretly buried in the churchyard of St. Clement Danes.

CHAPTER II.

IN NORMAN AND PLANTAGENET TIMES.

The Normans—London accepts their rule—The White Tower built—Changes along the river's banks during the reigns of the Norman kings—The old Wall on the south or river side not then existing—The various Strongholds in addition to the White Tower, Baynard's Castle, Montfichet's Tower, Bridewell—The fortified Gates to protect the Bridge—The growth of Southwark—St. Mary Overie—Winchester and Rochester Houses—Inns of the wealthy Abbots and Priors—The opposite bank along Fleet Street and the Strand—Changes at Westminster—The Abbey and Palace—The River-bank through the city—Taverns and Wine-shops—Fitzstephen—Games and Tournaments on the water—The Fire of 1136 and the Great Drought—The rebuilding of the Bridge in stone—Peter of Colechurch—The story of the Bridge—The canal between Rotherhithe and Battersea—The calamity of 1212—The frost of 1282—The high tide of 1235—The enlargement of the Tower in 1190 under Richard I. and Henry III.—Queen Eleanor insulted by the Londoners—The Temple—Westminster Abbey and Palace, Lambeth—The appearance of the River during the succeeding centuries, and the principal events on its surface up to the Tudor period.

HOWEVER stirring the events may have been which the old river witnessed during the reign of Edward and the short reign of Harold, there was another still more momentous at the Norman occupation. Shortly after the decisive battle at Senlac, or Hastings, when Harold was slain, William of Normandy continued his march towards London and encamped within a short distance at Blackheath. The remains of Harold's army, with the two Saxon Earls, Edwin and Morcar, had shut themselves up within the walls of London together with Edgar Atheling, grandson of Edmund Ironside, whom they proclaimed King ; but William and his victorious troops were soon at Southwark at the foot of the bridge. The citizens first made a show of resistance, and sallied across to repel the invaders, but they were defeated, and the cluster of houses in Southwark which had sprung up round the bridge-

foot and along the causeway were soon in flames. This reverse, and the submission of Edgar Atheling to William, so intimidated the citizens that wiser counsels prevailed. The portreeve and principal citizens opened their gate and drawbridge and presented the keys to the Norman Duke, who, with his mailed warriors, took peaceful possession of London, the capital of the kingdom, and was soon after crowned King in Westminster Abbey, December 26th, 1066. It was in London that he principally resided, except when away to undertake punitive expeditions against the Saxon Earls in England or his own rebellious subjects in Normandy. The old Palace at Westminster, although it may have suited the peaceful Edward to be close to his half-finished Abbey of Westminster and his beloved monks, was hardly a suitable residence for a warrior-king, whose foot was continually in the stirrup and his sword in hand. Nor was he altogether confident or secure about the loyalty of London; he therefore began building a very strong fortress or castle, capable of resisting any siege, at the south-eastern angle of the city, where a fortification had existed from very remote times, and surrounded it with a strong wall and very deep moat. This still exists under the name of the White Tower, and with its subsequent additions is called "The Tower" to distinguish it above and beyond all others. In his own Normandy, at Caen, were large quarries of a fine white freestone, which he imported in large quantities, and the external wall of the huge and lofty square building was cased with this, and probably from its whiteness and newness the structure was called the White Tower. In subsequent reigns, as we know, it was whitewashed in order that its pristine whiteness might be maintained. Alas! however outwardly it may have assumed the robe of innocence, we know that its walls are stained with the blood of the weak and innocent, and the flowing river, as it glided by, must have been the silent witness of many a midnight murder, the secret of which is locked in its bosom. Fitzstephen, a monk of Canterbury, born of worshipful parents in the City of London, in his chronicle of London, to which future reference will be made, says of this Palatine Tower, which in his time was comparatively new, for he died in the reign of Richard the First, that its walls were cemented with "mortar tempered with the blood of beasts"—*Cemento cum sanguine animalium*

temperato—the good monk probably mistaking the pulverised Roman red brick used in the mortar for blood, from its colour.

During the reigns of the first four kings of the Norman dynasty, important changes were taking place along the river-bank which were gradually transforming the view of the old city from the river. The wall along the river-side had disappeared, the river having sapped the foundations; the fortress of the White Tower at one end of the city had almost its counterpart in Baynard's Castle at the other, and closely adjacent were Montfichet's Tower and two other towers erected by the citizens to protect the western approach to the city, one partly on the site of what was afterwards Blackfriars, and the other on the western side of the river Fleet, a strong tower called Bridewell. This tower was subsequently demolished, and the freestone given by William to Bishop Maurice towards the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral; but a portion was still retained as a royal residence, and used as a law-court, for Stow quotes a deed which he saw inscribed, *Facta in Curia Domini Regis apud Sanct Bridgid London, Anno Regni Regis Johannis 7*. At the north end of the bridge was a strong tower or gate, and another strong tower and gate at the south end to protect and work the draw-bridge and cut off the approach to the city from the south. Thus from the river these various towers and castles must have made the old city look more warlike than ever it did in the days when the walls on the south side still stood with their bastions along the bank.

Nor was this the only change on the city side, for the towers of many parish churches could be seen now clustering thickly round that towering mass of scaffolding which partly hid the lofty walls of the new cathedral, so stately and so vast that the citizens of those days thought it never could be finished. Looking towards the Surrey side one sees the southern towered gate of the bridge, and hard by it stands the large and imposing priory church of the Austin Canons, in the Norman style of architecture, St. Mary Overie, soon to be rebuilt almost in the form to which it has recently been restored. Close to it at the west end, with its walls almost rising from the water's edge, is the new palace of the Bishops of Winchester with its large hall and chapel, and beyond a smaller building tenanted by the Bishops of Rochester. The houses are now also becoming much thicker, and extend some distance southwards, and one

or two church towers can be seen, and the characteristics of the old marsh are fast disappearing as it gets covered with houses. Many of them are built of stone, and are the London residences of some of the wealthy abbots and priors whose business brings them to London and to the King's Court: the Abbots of Waverley and St. Augustine's, Canterbury, and Battle, the Prior of Lewes, and others; beyond these again are the roofs and towers of Bermondsey Abbey, just built. Along the southern shore of the river on the bank are many tenements whose inhabitants, even in those early days, have brought an evil reputation to the place.

Even the marshes themselves are beginning to change their character, dykes and drains surround cultivated patches, and there are more cottages now to be seen; but the greatest change is taking place along the brow of the hill, for the old highway to Westminster is fringed with houses, and Royal Westminster itself has become a much more imposing pile. The Abbey now looks more finished, and William the Red has added to the Confessor's Palace a vast Hall of Norman architecture, with a row of columns and arches down the centre. This vast Hall still stands, but its central row of columns and its Norman windows and wall-passages were to give way in Richard the Second's reign to traceried windows and one huge oaken roof covering the whole area. Sundry towers have also been added to the pile, but its low position causes it to be frequently flooded at any unusually high tide. Boats are now much more numerous on the river, and bring a number of suitors to and fro, the courts of law being in the King's Palace, and the highway along the Strand frequently impassable. In 1163 the famous Thomas Becket, then Chancellor of England, "repaired the palace with exceeding great celerity and speed, for it was ready to have fallen down." The monk Fitzstephen describes the palace in these words, "On the west side also, higher up on the bank of the river, the royal palace rears its head, an incomparable structure furnished with a breastwork and bastions, situated in a populous suburb, at a distance of two miles from the city." He also gives a quaint description of the banks of the river as it passes within the confines of the city. First speaking of the manner in which various trades were wont to select particular localities, so that all of one trade should be together, he continues, "There is also in London, on the bank

of the river, amongst the wine-shops which are kept in ships and cellars, a public eating-house ; there every day, according to the season, may be found viands of all kinds, roast, fried and boiled, fish large and small (among which Thames salmon doubtless preponderated), coarser meat for the poor and more delicate for the rich, such as venison, fowls and small birds. If friends wearied with their journey, should unexpectedly come to a citizen's house, and being hungry, should not like to wait till fresh meat be bought and cooked — *Dant famuli manibus lymphas*, &c.—they run to the river-side, and there everything that they could wish for is instantly procured. However great the numbers of soldiers or strangers that enter or leave the city at any hour of the day or night (evidently there were no licensing laws), they may turn in there if they please and refresh themselves according to their inclination, so that the former have no occasion to fast too long, or the latter to leave the city without dining." Fitzstephen, although so highly eulogistic of London, makes one unfortunate admission : " The only inconveniences of London are the immoderate drinking of foolish persons and the frequent fires." What with the juxtaposition of the eating-houses and the wine-shops, the old bank on the city side must have presented a very animated scene, and have re-echoed to the sound of revelry by night.

There is yet another river scene which the old monk gives us a graphic description of. " In the Easter holidays they (the young men) play at a game resembling a naval engagement. A target is firmly fastened to the trunk of a tree which is fixed in the middle of the river, and in the prow of a boat driven along by oars and the current stands a young man who is to strike the target with his lance ; if, in hitting it, he break his lance and keep his position unmoved, he gains his point and attains his desire : but if his lance be not shivered by the blow, he is tumbled into the river and his boat passes by, driven along by its own motion. Two boats are however placed there one on each side of the target, and in them a number of young men do take up the striker when he first emerges from the stream, *vel summa rursus cum bullit in unda*, when a second time he rises from the wave." One can readily imagine how crowded the old river bridge of timber would have been, and the shores on each side, with the number of spectators in boats watching a sport not altogether unattended by danger, a spice of which always seems

necessary to the popular enjoyment, whether it is "looping the loop" or some other modern entertainment of a like kind. This particular one described by the old monk differed slightly from water quintain, in which the target was movable and swung round with a heavy bag of sand, which unless the performer dexterously ducked would topple him over into the water also. He gives also a very full description of sliding, skating, and curling on the ice, and although he places the locale on "the great marsh which washes the walls of the city on the north side," doubtless the same scene might have been witnessed on the Thames, for in 1063 it was frozen over for fourteen weeks. This William "Stephanides," or Fitzstephen, was born in the reign of Stephen, and wrote his account in the reign of Henry the Second.

The old timber bridge spanning the river must have witnessed many a stirring scene, and have experienced many a vicissitude itself since the days of the Romans, and must have required continual repairs. In 1114, in the fourteenth year of the reign of Henry the First there was a great drought, and the river was so dried up at low water that under some of the old timber staging no water flowed, and between the Tower and the bridge and under the bridge, not only was it possible for men to cross on horseback, but men, women, and children did also wade over on foot. In 1136 occurred also one of those terrible fires which swept over the city, burning both east and west, commencing near London Stone, and spreading to Aldgate one way and to St. Paul's the other. The old timber bridge was burnt or considerably damaged, but it seems to have been very soon repaired, otherwise people could not have stood on it to witness the pastimes recorded by Fitzstephen. Soon after this we first hear of Peter of Colechurch, whose name has been so inseparably connected with London Bridge, for it is recorded that in 1163 he not only repaired it, but also newly remade it of timber. Whatever these last repairs were, the old timber bridge was doomed to disappear, and to be replaced by the first stone bridge, which was commenced about 1176 by the same Peter of Colechurch, priest and chaplain, a real Pontifex Maximus, for it was no easy matter to lay the foundations to carry stone piers and arches in a stream wide and moderately deep, with a tide ebbing and flowing continually. This Peter was also called Peter of St. Mary's, Colechurch,



HEAD OF A STATUE OF HADRIAN ; FOUND IN THE BED OF THE THAMES.
British Museum.



BANKSIDE, AND THE RUINS OF WINCHESTER HOUSE. *From an oil painting in the collection of Mr. Gardner.*



OLD LONDON BRIDGE. *From the view of London by Visscher.*



De Tower van Londen

THE TOWER OF LONDON. From a drawing by W. Hollar. British Museum.

but not much is known of him or how he came to be employed. He died before the completion of the bridge, about 1205, and was supposed have been buried in the Chapel of St. Thomas on the east side of the bridge. It consisted of nineteen or twenty arches, the largest of which was not more than thirty-five feet span, and although authorities differ as to the actual width, if two waggons could pass one another, and there were footways for passengers, besides the houses which stood on it, it certainly could not have been less than thirty to thirty-five feet wide. The houses, perhaps, were not there originally. Mr. H. W. Brewer thinks that Peter of Colechurch took advantage of a natural shoal in the bed of the river to start with in building his starlings, and in this he drove piles and filled in with rubble stone (this was the ninth pier on the city or north side, which was much larger and wider than any of the others); and, further, that he built the city half first from this point, and then went on with the remainder to the Southwark side. This hypothesis is probably right, as it would form a strong *point d'appui*, and it readily accounts for the presence of the Chapel of St. Thomas, the whole extent of the shoal being utilised and held in by the piles. Stow, in his *Survey*, says that "the whole course of the river was turned another way about by a trench cast for that purpose, commencing, as it is supposed, east about Radcliffe (Rotherhithe), and ending in the west about Patricksey, now termed Baterssey." A Herculean task, if true, but this account is probably an exaggeration. It is possible that a portion of the stream might have been diverted through channels in the marshes, but Southwark was already a populous suburb, and it would have been a most difficult bit of engineering for those early days. The bridge took exactly thirty-three years in building, being completed in 1209. The citizens had been assisted both by the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

It must have been a handsome structure when first erected, with its many arches, the soffits of each being carried by deeply chamfered stone ribs. Its handsome apsidal chapel was of two stories, the lower one, or crypt, being accessible from the river; it was sixty feet in height from the water, and was defended by a drawbridge and towers and fortified gate on the Southwark side. The arches were not of a uniform width, the three central ones being wider, and the others varied

according to the hardness of the bottom, so as to get a firm foundation for the starling. These starlings must have presented a curious sight at low water, as they projected far in front and on each side of the piers from which the arches sprang, confining the waterway to a narrow channel through which the stream rushed as through a mill. The river rather resented this attempt at fettering its liberty, and poured through these old arches like a cataract. Often at high water there was a fall of four or five feet between the two sides of the bridge, which made the navigation of it, or shooting the bridge as it was called, a matter not only of difficulty, but of great danger to the venturesome boatmen who attempted it.

Allusion has already been made to the death of Peter four years before its completion, and King John recommended to the citizens that they should employ another clergyman, one Isenbert, Master of the schools of Xainctes, who had already built or designed two bridges at Xainctes and Rochelle; but the citizens wanted no foreigner—they were always very touchy on that subject—and preferred to give it to three citizens—Serle Mercer, William Almaine, and Benedict Botewrite, who finished the work. Only four years after the bridge had been completed a terrible calamity took place on it, on the 12th of July, 1212, which the river must have witnessed in all its terrible intensity. A dreadful fire broke out at Southwark and extended to the old Norman Church of St. Mary Overie, and immense crowds were coming over the bridge to the scene of the conflagration, when another fire took place on the London end of the bridge which, by the violence of the south wind, blew right across it and prevented any one from returning. At the same time the fire on the Southwark side extended also to the houses at that end of the bridge, so that the crowd, hemmed in between two fires, expected nothing but death. Boats and ships put off to their rescue, and the people, wild with terror, so unadvisedly thronged them that they were capsized and the people drowned. It is said that through this double calamity over three thousand people lost their lives, whose bodies were found partly burnt, besides those who were wholly burnt and could not be found; but nothing is said of those who were drowned.

The description of this terrible calamity gives one the impression that, even from the very commencement, there must have been houses

on the bridge. If it were not so, why were the people so wild with terror?—because it is manifest that their safest plan would have been to have remained on the bridge, where, in the absence of houses, there could have been no danger; but one never knows, when a panic spreads among a multitude, what the possibilities may be. The Portfolio monograph on *Mediæval London*, published in 1901, has for its frontispiece a reproduction of an old illumination illustrating the poems of Charles Duke of Orleans, and painted certainly not later than 1500; and in it the houses on the bridge are distinctly shown as existing then, as they probably did two or three centuries before. The rush of the pent-up water through the bridge, the old starlings, and the chapel on the bridge are all distinctly shown, and there is but little doubt that the artist must have drawn from what he saw and not from his imagination, as was so often the case in illuminations to manuscripts. Another reason for believing in the existence of the houses at the time of the fire is that the stonework of the bridge was so much injured that the King granted a brief to the bridge-keeper to ask subscriptions of his subjects towards its repair, but, as this did not bring in much, he granted a toll to defray the expense.

Another calamity was in store for it before the close of the thirteenth century, for in 1282 there was a most terrible frost, the like of which had never been known. The pressure of ice heaped up against the bridge, and unable to pass through from the narrowness of the arches of the bridge, carried away five arches of it, and rendered it, of course, impassable for the time until they were rebuilt. One sees how the old river from time to time asserted itself, not only by the more direct method of sweeping away part of a bridge, but also by extraordinary flood-tides, caused probably by the direction of the wind, and not altogether unknown in these days. There was a memorable one in 1235, when all the low-lying grounds on the south side were flooded—and, far worse, the King's Palace at Westminster—and boatmen had to bring their boats into the Great Hall and rescue the lawyers, who, only accustomed to their own floods of eloquence, never dreamt that Father Thames would make such an attempt to drown them in one of his own.

During this century the river was constantly seeing changes in the

old landmarks on its banks. Henry III. made great alterations in the Tower of London, considerably enlarging its precincts, and adding another wall, with towers, to the original fortress, as built by the first Norman King. This gave great annoyance to the citizens, who saw in it a deliberate attempt to overawe them and to infringe upon their cherished freedom and privileges. In the year 1190 the old eastern wall of the city, from the postern gate to the river, had been removed by the then Chancellor, Longchamp, Bishop of Ely, for the enlarging of the Tower; for Stow says he "enclosed the tower and castle of London with an outward wall of stone embattled, and also caused a deep ditch to be cast about the same, thinking to have environed it with the river." But the Tower, with its inner and outer bailey and ditch, was not completed until afterwards—during the reigns of Henry III. and Edward I. It was always looked upon by the citizens as a standing menace. Between the White Tower and the river, Henry III. built a new royal lodging and a great Hall, and gave the very popular name of St. Thomas to the Water-gate. In some recent excavations for the foundations of that exceedingly ugly red-brick monstrosity erected by the War Office for a new guard-house, some interesting remains were found—a Roman hypocaust and walls and an ancient subway leading from the White Tower to the moat. There had always been a tradition that a subway existed, and that it went under the Thames; but its extension in that direction was manifestly impossible, and it probably led only as far as the moat. Stow's evidence about the city wall being destroyed to make way for the Tower was, however, confirmed by the existence of a fragment precisely similar in construction and thickness to that in Postern Row, at the south-east angle of the White Tower. In Lord Ronald Sutherland Gower's *Tower of London* these fragments are illustrated. Henry the Third's minute directions for the painting and decoration of the Royal apartments show that they were frequently occupied, the older apartments in the White Tower being abandoned for the new on the south and east sides. Frequent must have been the journeys to and fro between the Tower and Westminster, and the Royal barges must have been pretty familiar to the Londoners in those days. Nor were they always very polite to the occupants. It is recorded that Queen Eleanor, the wife of Henry III., leaving the Tower by barge to

go to Windsor and attempting to get through the bridge, was pelted by the mob with stones and filth, and some of her suite were hurt. The Queen was very unpopular, as many of her relations held important positions at Court, and her uncle Boniface, Archbishop of Canterbury, was particularly obnoxious both to the clergy and laity.

Further changes are now taking place, especially on the northern bank of the river, which by degrees are completely altering its aspect. At a point where the river begins to curve round to Westminster, embosomed amongst orchards and trees, we see the high roofs and pinnacles of the new Temple, and the massive tower which forms its treasury, for the Knights Templars have lately abandoned their old home near to Holborn, and have moved down to the river-bank. Here they have erected some very splendid buildings, notably their refectory and church, the latter happily still standing, and perhaps this spot, with its lawns and trees down to the river, is the only one which has survived and retained some of the characteristics of the river-side London of long ago. That old road along the brow of the hill is becoming more and more like a continuous street as it bends round with the course of the river to Westminster, and here again we note the changes that have taken place. Edward the Confessor's stately Norman church is gone, and its place has been taken by a magnificent pile, of which the choir and transepts are finished. It looks stupendous, so lofty is it, with its clustering chapels round the choir, and its long Lady Chapel, the precursor of the present Henry the Seventh's Chapel, and of the same length; yet the whole structure, in spite of its size, is remarkably light and airy, and is girt with curious flying arches or buttresses. It is not finished, and one sees scaffolding to the west, showing that the nave of the church is now building. The palace also has become more important. It has been added to, and one sees trees and gardens between it and the river. Beyond, on the other bank, a little higher up than the palace, are some new towers belonging to an important building, and a large chapel. That is the palace of the Archbishops of Canterbury. Archbishop Boniface and one of his predecessors, Hubert Walter, have been building it, so as to be lodged near the Court. It is quite close down to the river, and seems more like a baron's strong castle than the home of an archbishop; but Boniface is of a warlike disposition,

and has been known to have worn armour under his silken robes.

The surrounding scenery on that side does not yet show many signs of change ; there are still those interminable marshes, with the line of low distant hills beyond, the course of the ditches and pools marked by a low fringe of willows and alders. And on the Westminster side again, beyond the Abbey and Palace, and the few houses which have sprung up round them, the marshes recommence, and reach to Chelsea. The river shores are covered with sedges and tall reeds and rushes, and as we pass wild fowl rise up from among them ; and the only sign of human life may be a hind or peasant in a boat, fishing or cutting the reeds in bundles, for they are famous for making the best sort of thatch, with which, unfortunately, whole streets in the city are still roofed. What a solitude are the upper reaches of the river, with scarcely a sound but the wind swishing through the reeds as they bend before it, or the rippling and lapping of the tide. One is glad to get back to where there is life and movement, and the busy hum of men, and see the dancing gleams of light from the houses on the bridge reflected on the rushing waters as they whirl through the old arches of the bridge. Beyond the bridge now, or, more properly speaking, below the bridge, are moored many ships in a part of the river called the Pool. A few come through, bringing foreign wines to the Three Cranes Wharf, Vintners' Wharf, and Queenhithe ; but there is a heavy toll demanded, and there is considerable delay in raising the drawbridge. Smaller boats are continually plying to and fro, and bringing merchandise to the many wharves above the bridge. The old city now presents a very much more imposing appearance : the enormous mass of the Cathedral proudly asserts itself above all the various towers and spires clustering round it. The long nave is now balanced by a choir of equal length, and in the centre rises a lofty tower and spire of unusual altitude. One can also see from the river some long, lofty roofs of the churches belonging to the various orders, the Austin Canons and the Austin Friars, the Dominicans or Black Friars, the Franciscans or Grey Friars—the last named, not far from the Cathedral, is over three hundred feet in length—while south of the ascent of Fleet Street is the establishment and church of the White Friars or Carmelites, and at the extreme

east of the city can be discerned the towers of the Priory Church of the Holy Trinity, Aldgate.

From a distance the old city looks like a city of churches as it sits enthroned on the gentle eminence rising from the banks of the Thames. It must have been a fair picture to look upon, but its inhabitants were rather unruly at times, and, like the proverbial Vicar of Bray, often changed sides ; and the old river, ebbing and flowing quietly past, must have witnessed many a strife for the possession of the bridge.

The first Edward was a man of strong character and governed with a strong hand, and did not spend so much time as his predecessors either at Westminster or the Tower. Some little time before his reign the old Portreeve, or Portgrave, had blossomed out into a full-grown Lord Mayor, and the government of the city was in stronger hands and with more power at its back, but during the reign of his weak son, Edward, disturbances were frequent. The Tower was besieged and taken by the citizens, and the keys afterwards given to Isabella and the Mortimers. Edward II. made one addition to the banks of the river, which for some time was a great ornament to it. King Stephen had built the chapel of the palace at Westminster, or rebuilt one on the site. Edward II. removed this, and began the very beautiful Chapel of St. Stephen, which was finished by his son.

There is little to record about the river during the third Edward's reign. He sometimes stayed in the Tower, and one of his children, Blanche de la Tour, was born there ; and he kept on very good terms with the citizens. During the reign of his father, the Knights Templars were suppressed and the Temple knew them no more. Although their suppression was not attended with the dreadful cruelties and burnings carried out by Philip of France, at Paris, at the head house of their order, it was severe enough : they were all imprisoned, and the principal charge was heresy ; but the real cause, their riches and arrogance. After having been held for a short time by private persons, this beautiful place by the river-side, with its gardens and orchards, passed into the possession of the Knights Hospitallers of St. John of Jerusalem, who, having their own monastery at Clerkenwell, did not make much use of it, and let it out, with its hall and chapel, to the law students, who have ever since retained it.

During the inglorious reign of Richard the Second the banks of the river saw many changes, especially at the old palace at Westminster. Richard nearly rebuilt the royal apartments facing the river; but the old House of Lords, the Painted Chamber, the Princes' Chamber, and the Chapel were not touched. The cloisters attached to the Chapel were rebuilt subsequently. The enormous sums which the King spent on these operations and on his lavish entertainments—sums raised by oppressive taxes and exorbitant fines—made him so unpopular with the citizens that when, at length, he was deposed by his cousin, they hailed Henry of Lancaster as a deliverer, and not one of them would shout "God save King Richard" as the two rode through the streets of the city—the one to a throne, the other to a prison. In 1396 the old bridge saw a gorgeous procession pass through its gateways and between its houses, all gay with pennons and tapestry and wreaths and garlands. It was to welcome Richard's second Queen, Isabella of France, a child of eight years old. She had come from the manor house of Kennington, through Southwark, and was passing over the bridge on her way to the Tower, and such was the crush on the bridge to see the child-bride that nine people were crushed to death on the bridge—among them was the Prior of Tiptree in Essex, and a worshipful matron of Cornhill. One's mind travels on through the ages and recalls another procession, when a youthful bride from Denmark passed over the bridge, and was received by the citizens with the same joy and splendour. As Alexandra, the Rose of Denmark, she took possession of our hearts, and has reigned there from that time to this, first as Princess of Wales and now Queen of England—and long may that winsome presence remain with us. In the fifteenth century we read of another great procession over the bridge. The Lord Mayor and citizens had gone forth in gorgeous array to meet the King, Harry of Monmouth, at Blackheath, on his return to England after his marvellous victory at Agincourt, where the flower of French chivalry was laid in the dust. Well might the bells ring and conduits run with wine, the citizens bedeck themselves and their houses, and shouts of welcome hail the conquerors as they passed over the old bridge, Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter, Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloster—their names familiar in our mouths as household words—that fought with him upon St. Crispin's Day.

Then the scene shifts to the pleasant garden of the Temple close by the river's brink, where the red and the white roses are plucked by Richard Plantagenet and Warwick, and a brawl begins which soon shall grow into that deadly feud called the Wars of the Roses, and "send a thousand souls to death and deadly night." What authority Shakespeare had for thus fixing the scene of the incident at the Temple is now unknown; probably it was a tradition in his day and believed in by all. Thus the fifteenth century draws to its close, but the river glides on undisturbed by the strife, which does not approach its banks. The sixth Henry passes and repasses in his barge, now bound for the Tower as a prisoner, now back again to Westminster as a King.

CHAPTER III.

IN TUDOR TIMES. HOUSES OF THE BISHOPS AND NOBLES.

Deptford and the River—Changes at the Tower—The Churches from the River—Baynard's Castle—Bridewell—Whitefriars—Exeter or Essex House—Bath Inn—Arundel House—The Inns or Houses of the Bishops of Lichfield and Coventry, Worcester and Llandaff—The Protector Somerset—The Savoy—Carlisle Inn, afterwards Worcester House—Salisbury House—Exeter or Burleigh House—Durham House—York House—Suffolk or Northumberland House—Whitehall and Westminster—Gunpowder Plot—Pimlico, or Manor of the Neate, Chelsea—Sir Thomas More—Royal Nursery, Somerset House, under the Tudors and Stuarts—Subsequent History—The Elizabethan period of the Drama—Shakespeare and his fellow Playwrights—The Theatres at Whitefriars—Salisbury Court—Dorset Gardens—Blackfriars—Bankside—Bull and Bear Baiting—The Globe—The Swan—The Puritans and the Restoration.

WHILE all this strife has been going on between the White Rose and the Red, London on Thames has been quietly changing its aspect. There are many more ships now moored below the bridge, and there is the sound of hammering as new ones are built in the yards along the southern bank of the river, from the bridge along Bermondsey to Rotherhithe and Deptford. One sees the carpenters and boat-builders at work on many a quaint framework with what will be the figure-head turned towards the river; piles of timber lie ready, and in the few open spaces left on the shore rope-makers are at work. For trade is increasing, and vessels are wanted to carry and to fetch things from beyond seas. The grim Tower of London, with its frowning battlements and towers and wide moat, shows no change externally, but even there, behind the walls, many new structures are rising. The buildings to the south and east, which contain the royal apartments, are being altered, and larger windows are replacing the narrow lights of the previous centuries. Nearer the bridge Billingsgate and the old Custom House present a busy scene on their quays in front. Beyond, on Tower Hill, the houses of the citizens form a thick fringe around the open space. Churches are being

rebuilt on a larger scale and are adorned with large traceried windows. Allhallows Barking, St. Dunstan in the East, and St. Magnus are now quite important buildings, and so are most of those seen from the river. There are more boats and barges on its surface ; the " silent highway " is much frequented, and, whether on pleasure or business bent, the citizens prefer it if it can only take them within a short walk of their destination. Baynard's Castle has been repaired, or almost rebuilt, by Henry the Seventh. During the reigns of his immediate predecessors, Edward the Fourth and Richard the Third, it had been frequently occupied by them. Now it has lost much of its fortress-like look. Stow says : " It was not embattled or so strongly fortified castle-like, but far more beautiful and commodious for the entertainment of any prince or great estate." Henry and his Queen, Elizabeth of York, lodged here, and on one memorable occasion he entertained all the Knights of the Garter, who first rode in their habits from the Tower to St. Paul's and then repaired hither. In the same year Henry here received the King of Castile.

In the reign of his son, the neighbouring old site of Bridewell came into favour again, and Henry the Eighth built on it a new palace. The Emperor Charles the Fifth came to visit Henry and Catherine of Arragon, and although the Emperor chose to be lodged at the Blackfriars, his suite was entertained and lodged here. A gallery of communication was built from the palace over the Fleet River, through the City Wall, into the Blackfriars. Henry occupied Bridewell frequently, and it was in this palace that he assembled all the nobility, judges, and councillors to open unto them his doubts as to the validity of his marriage with Catherine. The King and Queen lodged here also whilst the question was being argued in the Hall of the Blackfriars, 1529. Edward the Sixth alienated it and bestowed it on the City of London to be used as a house for the poor, and also as a place of confinement for idle and vicious vagrants, who were there whipped and made to work, very much against their wills. The character of the entertainment provided for the unwilling inmates does not seem to have much varied down to the time of Hogarth; who showed the interior in Plate IV. of the " Harlot's Progress." Disobedient or idle apprentices within the city were also committed to Bridewell by the City Chamberlain—the right of committal still exists

Beyond Bridewell the houses cluster thickly round St. Bride's, and on the ground lately occupied by the Whitefriars houses are being rapidly erected, forming a neighbourhood which, through some mistaken idea of sanctuary, will soon degenerate into the notorious Alsatia. There are many more buildings now in the Temple, although the shady walks and verdant lawns still give a rural character to the river's bank; beyond this are the inns or town houses of several of the nobility and the bishops. There is Exeter House, where the bishops of that see reside when attending Parliament. This had been two centuries before the scene of a violent riot, for the citizens, after they had beheaded Bishop Walter Stapylton, brought the body here and placed it under a heap of sand among the unfinished buildings which the Bishop was erecting. Stapylton, who was a strong partisan of Edward the Second, more than shared that monarch's unpopularity. It was he who founded Exeter College, Oxford, and erected the enormous episcopal throne in Exeter Cathedral. This house or inn, which was the usual term for the town house of a nobleman, passed through the hands of several successive owners, being called at one time Paget House, and finally Essex House. It had a fine garden, and a water-gate and stairs. Essex Street passes over the site of the house and garden, and Devereux Court over the stables and yard. Beyond is a narrow lane called Milford, with a steep descent down to the river. It is an old lane, and has a curious history, for it was in this lane that the forge stood for which the city authorities as owners have to count out so many horse-shoes, &c., annually as a quit-rent, although the property can no longer be identified. The Bishop of Bath's inn stood next, but this had been purchased or otherwise acquired by Lord Thomas Seymour, Admiral, and almost entirely rebuilt, and then passed from him into the possession of the Earl of Arundel, and is now called Arundel House. It is a very fine mansion, with a towered gateway and a large hall, and with a garden on the river-side. A view of it has been preserved by Hollar. Following in succession along the brow of the hill are the inns of the Bishops of Lichfield and Coventry, Worcester and Llandaff, and another inn called Chester's or Strand Inn, but this is one of the Inns of Court. There is also a graveyard and small parish church, dedicated to the Nativity of the

Blessed Virgin and also to the Holy Innocents. But this church and all these inns, including Chester's Inn, have been acquired by Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset and Lord Protector, and he is about to build a magnificent house on all these sites, to be called after him, Somerset House, with fair and large gardens on the river-side. People whisper that to obtain material to do this he has destroyed the large cloister at St. Paul's and Pardon Church Haugh, and most of the church and buildings of St. John's Priory, Clerkenwell, and that several other ecclesiastical buildings are marked out for destruction.

We must return and look at Somerset House when it is built ; at present we pass on to the next large house, only separated from Somerset House by a narrow lane called Duchy Lane. This is the large and imposing building called the Savoy Palace. It has stood here for many years, and was originally built by the Earl of Savoy in 1245. His niece Eleanor was then the Queen of England, and her four sisters were all Queens—Margaret, the eldest, Queen of France ; Sanctia, Queen of the Romans ; Beatrix, Queen of Naples ; and Johanna, Queen of Navarre. The Earl left it to a religious community, the Brethren of Mountjoy, but Eleanor bought it back from them and gave it to her son, Edmund of Lancaster, who greatly enlarged it. It was in the possession of the House of Lancaster at the time that John, King of France, was lodged in it in 1357, after the battle of Cressy ; and Froissart tells us that Edward and Philippa often came to see him and “ made hym gret feest and cheere.” He returned to the Savoy in 1363 and died there. Henry, Duke of Lancaster, who died some time previous to this splendid captivity of the French King, left two daughters only, the younger of whom, Blanche, married John of Ghent, or Gaunt, as we islanders call it, Edward the Third's third son, who was created Duke of Lancaster. As his wife's elder sister Mary died without issue, he succeeded to the estates. During the lifetime of this “ time-honoured Lancaster,” the Savoy was the scene of more than one riot and tumult. The Duke was not popular with the Londoners ; he had befriended Wyclif and insulted and threatened the Bishop of London in his own cathedral. The palace was attacked by a mob, and if the Bishop himself had not exerted his influence with the mob and persuaded them to disperse, they would have proceeded to extremities. On a second occasion, some four

years afterwards, the palace was again attacked by Wat Tyler and his adherents, and Duke John had to fly for his life. The palace was pillaged and set on fire, and all its costly furniture destroyed. Two and thirty of the rebels had unfortunately found their way to the wine cellars, "where they drank so much of sweet wines that they were not able to come out in time, but were shut in with wood and stones that mured up the door, where they were heard crying and calling seven days after, but none came to help them out till they were dead." For upwards of a hundred years the palace stood a heap of blackened ruins; but Henry the Seventh resolved to rebuild it as a hospital for the poor, and he must have done so almost entirely, leaving very little of the former palace of Duke John. Perhaps the river-front may have been altered only slightly. It had been placed differently from most of the other houses and inns of the nobility, for it was close down to the water's edge. There was no pleasant garden sloping to the river, which at high tide washed the walls. Henry's pious intentions, however, were eventually set on one side; his grandson gave all the bed and bedding and a good portion of its revenues to Christ's Hospital and Bridewell, and the rest of its endowment was further reduced by embezzlement. It was finally dissolved in 1702, and what was left of its revenues was put in charge of the Court of Exchequer for the use of the Duchy of Lancaster. One portion of the old building survives—the Hospital Chapel. When Somerset destroyed the church of Our Lady in the Strand, he promised the parishioners he would build them another on a different site, but at this period many exalted persons "lost their heads," things got forgotten, and the then Master of the Savoy offered this hospital church for the use of the parish. Although it was dedicated to St. John the Baptist, the old name of St. Mary was given to it, which it still retains. A new church of St. Mary was afterwards built in the Strand, but the Savoy chapel and its services are still maintained by the Duchy.

Next to the Savoy was the inn of the Bishops of Carlisle. This at the Reformation had been transferred by the Crown to the Russell family, and was then known as Bedford House; but the Earls of Bedford moved over to the other side of the Strand, and built a new house on the site of Southampton Street, Strand; and Carlisle or Bedford House passed to

the second Marquis of Worcester, whose son was the first Duke of Beaufort. Anne Hyde, the daughter of the great Lord Clarendon, was married here privately at night to James, Duke of York, the house being then in the temporary occupation of Lord Clarendon. Being of great size and having a large hall, it was frequently used for public ceremonies. Pepys speaks of Lord Clarendon making an appointment with him at 8 p.m. on his return to Worcester House, where Pepys waited for him. "Here I staid and saw my Lord Chancellor come into his great Hall, where wonderful how much company there was to expect him at a Seale." Beaufort Buildings occupy the site.

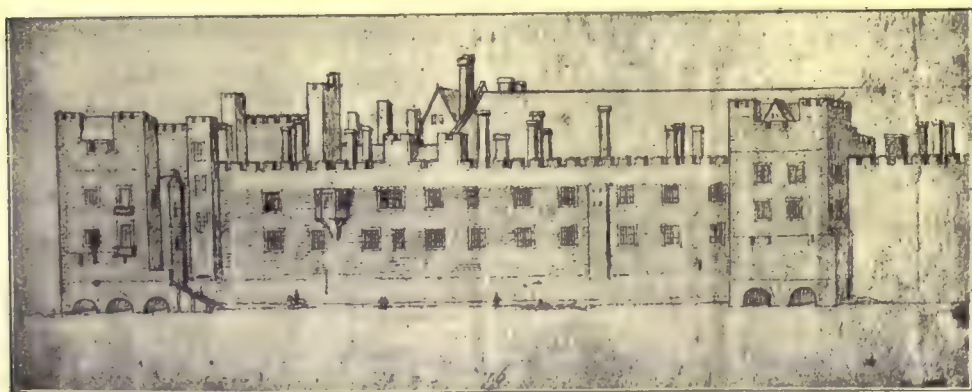
Salisbury House stood next to the west. It was built by Sir Robert Cecil before he was made Earl of Salisbury and Lord High Treasurer. Elizabeth honoured Cecil by being present at the house-warming. Besides the large house occupied by the Earls, there was a smaller which they let to persons of distinction. In the smaller house lived for some time William, third Earl of Devonshire, father of the first Duke. These houses were pulled down in 1695, and Cecil and Salisbury Streets built on the sites of the houses and gardens. They in their turn have gone, and the Hotel Cecil now occupies the site. Other houses on the north side of the Strand had also been built, the most famous being Exeter House, the residence of Thomas Cecil, Earl of Exeter. It was first known as Cecil or Burleigh House. During the Commonwealth, Evelyn gives a graphic description of his attending Divine service in the chapel attached to this house, and the Parliamentary soldiers pointing their muskets at them as they went up to receive the Sacrament. Exeter Street and Burleigh Street mark the site of this mansion now.

Durham House or Inn, the property of the Bishop of Durham, had been built by Thomas de Hatfield, Bishop of Durham, about 1345. It was a fine large building with chapel and hall, the latter very stately and high, supported by lofty marble pillars. It had its gatehouse on the Strand side, passing under which you came into a large courtyard, with the hall and chapel facing you, and with private apartments looking on to the river. It was described as a noble palace, befitting the Prince-Bishops of Durham, and like the Savoy was nearer to the river than the street. Henry the Fourth, and his son Henry Prince of Wales,

and their retinues, stayed here on one occasion, so that it was large and spacious. It remained in the possession of the See of Durham until the time of Bishop Cuthbert Tunstall, who conveyed the house in fee to Henry the Eighth. Why the King, with so many palaces and manors on his hands, should want this, unless to reward some of the greedy swarm of courtiers who surrounded him, is unknown. The King promised him Coldharbour and other houses, which the Bishop never got. Edward the Sixth granted it to the Princess Elizabeth for life, or until she was otherwise advanced. When Mary came to the throne Bishop Tunstall had no place to come to in London, so Mary promptly took Durham House away from Elizabeth and gave it back to the Bishop, who had been the very one to alienate it. What with that and other changes, the Bishop could hardly have known where he stood. Promoted by Henry the Eighth to Durham, but his house taken away from him; deprived of the See of Durham by Edward the Sixth and the bishopric dissolved; restored to everything by Mary, including his house, in 1552; deprived of everything again by Elizabeth, he must have been made fairly giddy by these frequent turns of the wheel of fortune. From 1559 to 1583 Elizabeth kept it in her own hands, and in that year bestowed it upon Sir Walter Raleigh, who lived here until the death of Elizabeth, which the then Bishop of Durham thought a good opportunity to lay claim to the property on the part of the See. Raleigh's sun had set, and James, who from his first arrival in England had look askance at him, was not sorry when his Privy Council decided against Raleigh. It was in vain for him to remonstrate and show that he had spent £2000 upon it for repairs. Might was right as much with James as it had been with his Tudor relatives and predecessors. Aubrey said that he well remembered the room which Raleigh used as his study, which was in a little turret that looked into and over the Thames, and a fair view it must have been of the sunlit river round the curve to Westminster. No factories or chimneys or miles of houses to obstruct the view towards the Surrey hills, and no vile railway bridge or huge terminus to shut out from sight the turrets and bay windows of Whitehall. Neither Tobias Matthew, who was Bishop of Durham at the time, nor any other bishop came back to this house, and it must have become ruinous. The stables were turned into the "New Exchange,"



VIEW FROM THE TOP OF ARUNDEL HOUSE. *From the engraving by W. Hollar.*



SAVOY PALACE. *From a drawing by W. Hollar. Sir John Soane's Museum.*



WATER GATE OF YORK HOUSE, DESIGNED BY INIGO JONES. *From a drawing by Nash. Sir John Soane's Museum.*



WHITEHALL, WITH THE BARGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY. From a print in the Crace Collection. British Museum.



LAMBETH PALACE. From a drawing by G. Shepherd. Sir John Soane's Museum.

with an upper and lower range of shops, on each side of a central alley, and occupied by milliners and sempstresses. The best portion of the house was tenanted by Lord Keeper Coventry, who died here in 1640; and what remained of it was subsequently obtained by Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery, who intended to have built a fine house on the site. The arrangement made with the See of Durham was that he was to pay £200 per annum. The new house was never built, and the Earl of Pembroke made a street through the old remains down to the river, called Durham Street. The last portion of Durham House was cleared away early in the reign of George the Third, when the brothers Adam built the Adelphi, raising the whole level on lofty arches. The upper portion of Durham Street at the Strand end still exists, a short, steep street, plunging down under the Society of Arts and disappearing in the gloom of the dark arches of the Adelphi.

The Archbishops of York, no longer possessing Whitehall, built another house next to Durham House. Mary, who in her short reign tried to undo some of the most glaring acts of injustice committed by her two predecessors, had given to the Archbishop of York Suffolk House in the Borough, which had been the stately home of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk; but this the Archbishop had sold, the situation being too far from the Court and Parliament, and had bought this site on the northern bank, on which was an old mansion belonging to the Bishop of Norwich. But Archbishop Heath, the builder of the new house, was the only prelate who ever resided in it. During the occupancy of the See by his five successors it was leased to the Lord Keepers of the Great Seal. Lord Chancellor Bacon, otherwise Francis, Earl of Verulam, was born here in 1560, and here his father, Nicholas Bacon, died in 1597, and several Lord Chancellors lived here in succession. Archbishop Matthew allowed the first Duke of Buckingham of the Villiers family to reside in it until an exchange could be made, which was finally effected, and it remained in their possession until the second Duke sold it for £30,000 to some speculators, who built streets and houses on the site, and fancifully named them after him, George Street, Villiers Street, Duke Street, Of Alley, Buckingham Street. York House is commemorated by York Buildings. The beautiful water-gate at the end of Buckingham Street, now half buried in the Embankment

Gardens, is the sole relic left of this mansion. It was designed by Inigo Jones, and built and carved by Nicholas Stone, master mason to the Kings James the First and Charles the First. Hungerford House came next to this, but was built at a later date. Charing Cross Terminus covers the site, and the singularly ugly railway bridge which replaced the graceful suspension bridge, now re-erected over the Avon near Clifton, retains the old name.

Northumberland House stands next. Originally there was a hospital called St. Mary Rouncival near to or on this site, but it had been long suppressed. The estate came into the possession of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, and the house which he erected was first known by that name. It passed at his death to Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk. The daughter of the second Earl married Algernon Percy, Earl of Northumberland. During the occupancy of the Earls of Suffolk the house was called after their name, but it changed its nomenclature on the marriage of Elizabeth Howard to the Earl of Northumberland, and was always known by that last name until it was pulled down. Northumberland Avenue now passes over the site of the house and gardens. The plan had originally been a hollow square, with the open side towards the gardens, and each corner had a tower like those on the Strand front. Earl Algernon enclosed this square on the garden side by a new range of state rooms added by Inigo Jones, who, according to Evelyn, built a "clumsy pair of stairs of stone without any invention" from the higher level of the south front down to the gardens. The house when destroyed lately had lost much of its antiquity from modern alterations.

The old Palace at Westminster, which, from decay and frequent fires, had become so damaged as to be almost uninhabitable, was deserted now by the King and his court, who had removed to Whitehall. Wolsey, who as Archbishop of York had occupied this house pertaining to the archbishopric, was residing here when disgraced. It had been originally built by Hubert de Burgh on ground granted by the monks of Westminster. He left it by will in 1242 to the Black or Dominican Friars, then lodged in the old Temple near Holborn. They in turn sold it to Walter Gray, or de Grey, Archbishop of York, who bequeathed it at his death to the See, and thus it received the name of York Place. When in the occupation of Wolsey in the

zenith of his power as Cardinal, Legate de latere, and Lord High Chancellor, it was rebuilt by him with great magnificence. A description of the palace, with its many state rooms, hall, chapel, and gallery, and their magnificent furniture, hangings, and plate, gives us an insight into the luxury of that most profuse and luxurious court of Henry the Eighth. The state rooms were probably in the building along the river-front. The news of the fall of such an exalted personage soon spread, and the river was crowded with boats full of spectators waiting to see Wolsey conveyed to the Tower; but to their astonishment the Cardinal's barge, with him and his retinue on board, turned up the river and landed him at Putney, whence he proceeded to Esher Palace, which belonged to him as Bishop of Winchester. At Putney he was met by a gentleman, Mr. Norris, who rode down the hill to meet him with a letter from the King assuring him of his present and future favour. This was a favourite ruse of the Tudor sovereigns, who played with their victims as cats do with mice. Wolsey never returned to York Place, and was compelled to surrender the buildings and gardens to the King. Judge Shelly had been sent to him in order to obtain a recognisance before a judge that the right belonged to the King. Wolsey's reply was that he could not give what was not in his power to give. Parliament and the Dean and Chapter of York, however, confirmed the "gift," and Henry was no sooner in possession than he set to work to enlarge the palace considerably. He had but lately laid out and walled in St. James's Park, and had built a small palace there; but the possession of York Place gave him a large plot of ground extending to the river itself. It is true that the public road passed along in front on the land side, so the new part was carried across it by way of Holbein's Gate to make a new frontage to St. James's Park, and here were built tennis courts, cockpit, bowling and tilt yard, with divers other lodgings and buildings, and York Place changed its name to Whitehall. Shakespeare alludes to this change in the play of *Henry the Eighth* :—

" Sir, you
Must no more call it York Place, that is past;
For since the Cardinal fell, that title's lost :
'Tis now the King's and called Whitehall."

The Act of Parliament, however, says, after enumerating what had

been built at York Place, "Wherefore it is enacted that all the said ground, mansion, and buildings, together with the said park and the entire space between Charing Cross and the Sanctuary at Westminster from the Thames on the east side to the park wall westward, with all the houses, tenements, lands, &c., and the soil of the ancient palace, shall from henceforth be deemed the King's whole Palace at Westminster and be called and named the King's Palace at Westminster for ever." This, as we all know, it was not, for from that time it was known as "Whitehall," and so continued until that memorable 4th of January, 1697, when the whole palace was burnt down. Evelyn says: "Whitehall burnt; nothing but walls and ruins left;" but the buildings on the park side and Inigo Jones's Banqueting House and a few meaner lodgings about Scotland Yard escaped.

With the jousts and junketings, the tilts and tournaments, the masques and masquerades, which distinguished this palace during the reigns of Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the First, we have nothing to do, for they took place in the palace and courtyard, and not on the river. We note rather the boats and barges clustering round the Privy Stairs and Whitehall Stairs, the state and pageantry of the river, the carved and gilded barges, the silken pennons, the music and laughter, and the measured sweep of the oars, the gaily clad oarsmen, and the more resplendent uniform of the King's barge-masters as they sweep by, all scarlet and gold, and disturb the white swans on the silvery river.

The Old Palace of Westminster, though deserted now by the King and court, is lively enough with the two Houses of Parliament within its walls. The once magnificent Chapel of St. Stephen has been fitted up for the House of Commons. Lodgings and houses for the various officials have sprung up on every vacant space, and their mean appearance detracts somewhat from the dignity of the old palace, but some are picturesque additions in their way. The Star Chamber buildings and those of the Court of Exchequer are among these, but on the opposite side towards the Abbey a number of meaner buildings have been erected, including one or two taverns. The remains of the old garden, now called Cotton Garden, still present a verdant appearance towards the river. At the extreme end of the building are the Parliament Stairs;

a narrow passage leads down to them, passing by the side of Prince's Chamber ; and abutting on to the old House of Lords are some houses with an entrance from the narrow passage, one of which has been leased to Percy, and has a small garden on the river-side. It was here that the Gunpowder Plot conspirators brought their barrels of gunpowder, to be afterwards safely stored under the cellar of the House of Lords, Henry the Third's, and perhaps Edward the Confessor's, old kitchen ; for the house having this river frontage, and this narrow, deserted passage to the stairs, the powder could be brought to it at night in a barge, and landed without fear of any one being about. The famous letter to Lord Monteagle fortunately averted what would have been one of the most horrible tragedies in history.

Immediately next to the Old Palace of Westminster, along the river-side as far as the Horseferry, building is going on, and also along the opposite bank, past the Archbishop's Palace, which has had some important additions : Cardinal Morton has built a fine gateway in red brick and stone, and the living apartments have been replaced by new red-brick buildings, having larger windows ; and, with the background of trees in the park and along the river-bank, the great house still presents an almost rural appearance. There is a landing-stage, with many boats and state barges belonging to the Archbishop, for he always crosses over the river in semi-state to go to the Parliament House. Beyond the houses at the Horseferry, on the Middlesex side, there are some flat meadows intersected by broad ditches, recalling the old marshes, but now we see cattle grazing in parts of them, and other parts are market-gardens, to supply the city with vegetables. This is called the Manor of Neate,* and formerly belonged to the Abbey at Westminster, but Edward the Sixth has granted it to Sir Anthony Browne. Close down to the water's edge are some houses, which are called the Neate houses, where the market-gardeners live. They must have been very close to the water, because we hear at a later period that the mother of Mistress Eleanor Gwyn fell from one of the windows of these houses into the water and was drowned. The bank now rises slightly, and we arrive at Chelsea, a small village clustering near a church and along the bank,

* This old English word "Neate" means cattle, cows and oxen ; and Tothill Fields and Pimlico had then become pasture and grass-fields.

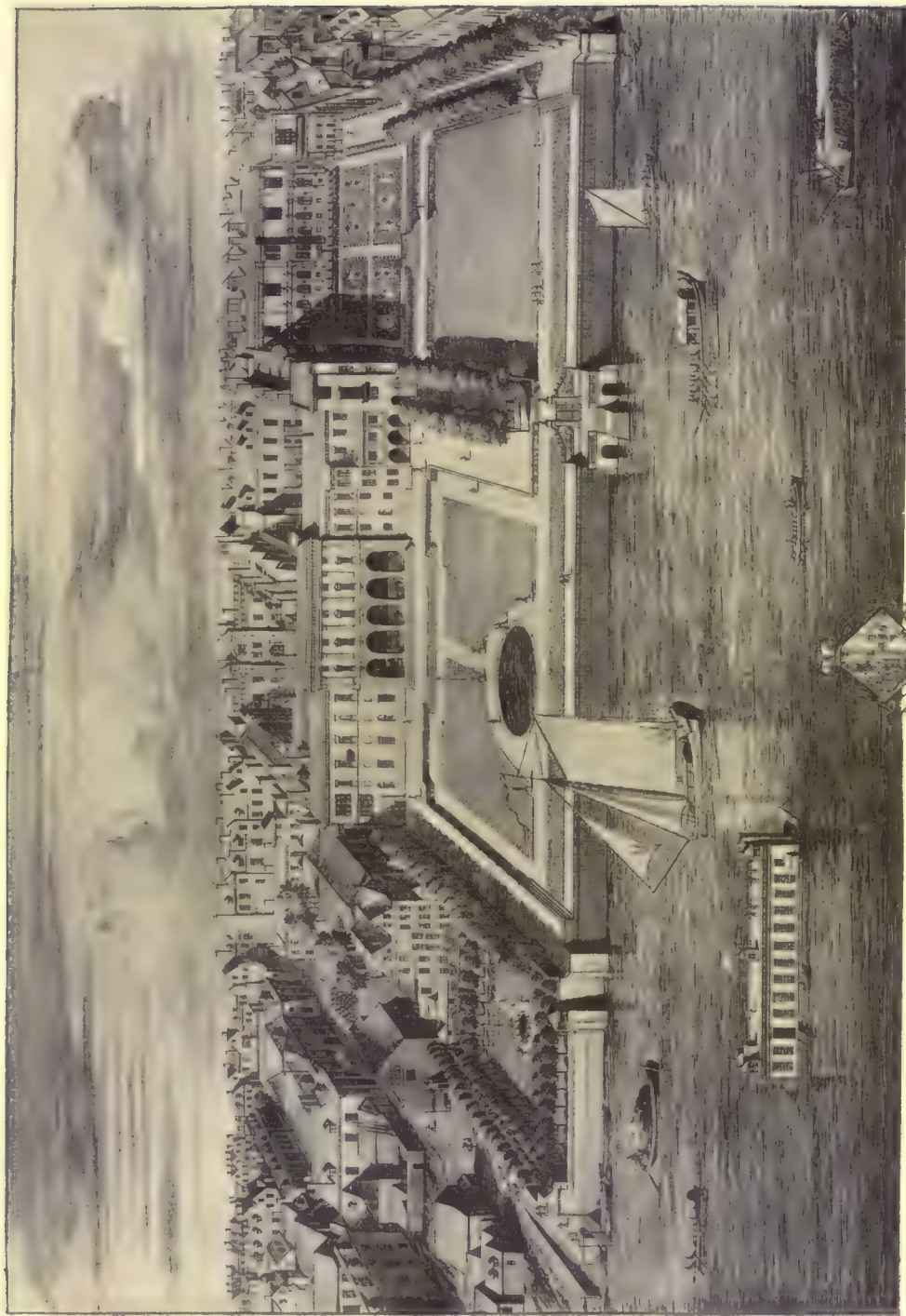
with one or two large houses interspersed. This village has always been considered very healthy, and is much resorted to. Sir Thomas More built a large house here with a gatehouse, and, although the Chancellor addresses a letter "from my pore house at Chelcith," it must have been a good-sized mansion, and he often entertained Henry the Eighth here. After he had met the usual fate of Henry's Chancellors, the King seems to have used the house for a royal nursery, as Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth were sent here for the sake of the good air. Queen Catherine Parr, who, to her own astonishment, outlived her much-married consort, dwelt in the house after she had wedded her third husband, Thomas Seymour, the Lord Admiral, and had with her the young Princess Elizabeth, who was then about thirteen. Seymour went the same way as Sir Thomas More. Anne of Cleves lived and died here, and the house is then described as "the King and Queen's Majesty's Palace of Chelsey." Some of the old red-brick garden walls were in existence quite lately. Sir Thomas More was a great benefactor to the old Chelsea Church; it was whispered that, although Lord Chancellor, he had been seen wearing a surplice and serving in the choir! In James the First's reign there was a scheme for building a college here, where learned men might be brought up to answer all attacks against religion, and one portion was actually built, but the college came to nothing, and on the site of it Chelsea Hospital was afterwards built, a foundation of which something shall be said later on.

But we must turn and go down the river with the tide, and note how, on our right hand, the old marshes are gradually losing their character, and what a number of houses are springing up, especially in the neighbourhood of those curious-looking buildings where they bait bulls and bears, and act stage-plays. But the object of our journey is to look at that magnificent house, or palace, lately built by the Lord Protector Somerset, in which, however, he never can have lived, as he departed in the usual way on Tower Hill in 1552. In the five years before that date he had expended £10,091 9s. 2d.—a large sum for those days—on this splendid building, which was designed by the celebrated architect, John of Padua. It is a moot question whether this John of Padua was not a plain Englishman, because in a book of original drawings by John Thorpe preserved at Sir John Soane's Museum, there is

the design for the Strand front as it was actually built ; but if so, John Thorpe must have been very young at the time. After the Duke's death the house remained unfinished and reverted to the Crown, and was granted by Edward the Sixth to his sister Elizabeth. She was certainly here once before her accession, for in 1557 she came from Hatfield on a visit to her sister Mary, then at Whitehall, and stayed in Somerset House. Elizabeth kept possession of it, although she created Somerset's son Earl of Hertford, and actually allowed him to live in it for a time. She principally used it as a house in which to lodge foreign ambassadors, but finally "lent" it to her kinsman, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, who died here in 1596. Probably the house had been finished by that time. After her death, James, her successor, settled it on Anne of Denmark, and it was here that her royal brother, Christian the Fourth, was lodged on a visit to the English Court. Although spoken of as the Queen's Palace in the Strand, it was renamed, in honour of the Queen, Denmark House. Anne added to it, and the palace then consisted of three courts—the largest, on the left as we look at it from the River, was on a level with the Strand ; to the right of this was a smaller court on a much lower level—both these courts were surrounded by buildings on all four sides. Still further to the right was another large court, with the south side open to the garden and a high wall on the east side, so that the buildings round this court only occupied two sides of it. At the other end of the palace was the base court, or stable-yard, with a number of irregular buildings and sheds round it, where eventually a large chapel was built and other apartments in connection with it—this part was called the Friary. The chapel, which was probably Inigo Jones' work, was for the accommodation of the rather numerous retinue of Roman priests and chaplains and Capuchin friars, whom the three Queens—Henrietta Maria, Catherine of Braganza, and Mary Beatrix of Modena—maintained as part of their household. They had been allowed the free exercise of their religion, a privilege which was at one time grossly abused, for so insolent and overbearing did Queen Henrietta's French retinue become that Charles the First packed them all back to France. After the Restoration, Henrietta Maria came here again, and occupied the house until she finally returned to France. The same intrigues recommenced when it passed into the

possession of Catherine of Braganza. It was a popular belief that the murder of Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey took place at Somerset House, but there is not a scrap of evidence to support it. That he was foully murdered and his body placed where it was found is a fact, but by whom is shrouded in mystery. Catherine removed from Whitehall to Somerset House on the death of Charles, and resided here until 1692, when she left England to retire to Portugal. Lord Faversham then took care of the house until her death in 1705. The gardens towards the river were beautifully laid out, with a terrace walk along the river-wall, broken in the centre by a very stately stone staircase, adorned with statues of the Thame and Isis. These steps were private; the public stairs, which were very much used and very popular, were at the bottom of Duchy Lane.

Somerset House had been the scene of many state ceremonials. Cromwell's body, vested in regal robes and with a crown, lay here in state prior to its removal for interment in Westminster Abbey. George, Duke of Albemarle (General Monk), also lay in state here, and was honoured with a magnificent funeral before the final ceremony of burial in Henry the Seventh's Chapel. The Prince of Orange, afterwards William the Third, was lodged here prior to his marriage with the King's niece, Mary, the eldest daughter of James, Duke of York. It was curious that another Prince of Orange stayed here also in 1734, when he came for a similar purpose, to marry Ann, Princess Royal, eldest daughter of George the Second. Although still the residence set apart for queen-dowagers, it was also used for the reception of ambassadors. The Venetian Ambassador, in 1763, was entertained here for several days, and in 1764 the Hereditary Prince of Brunswick was an inmate before his marriage with Augusta, George the Third's eldest sister and mother of the ill-used Caroline, Queen Consort of George the Fourth. But long before this, lodgings in Somerset House had been assigned to various poor members of the aristocracy, and it had become a sort of Hampton Court. On the foundation of the Royal Academy, or very soon after, the old royal apartments were assigned to them, and the old furniture and hangings removed, to go to utter ruin in a shut-up portion of the palace supposed to be haunted. Mr. G. M. Moser, the first keeper of the Royal Academy, lived here, and his



OLD SOMERSET HOUSE AND GARDENS. *From an engraving after Kniff.*



OLD SOMERSET HOUSE, WITH OLD ST. PAUL'S IN THE DISTANCE. From a drawing by T. Hyeck in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



OLD FISHMONGERS' HALL. From a drawing in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



THE CUSTOM HOUSE, DESIGNED BY SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN. *From an engraving after Maurer.*

relation, Joseph Moser, gives a very graphic description of the dirty and decayed condition of all this forgotten splendour when the old long gallery and cross gallery and yellow room were opened prior to the destruction of old Somerset House. Among the crowded articles was an old throne and canopy ; curtains of once crimson velvet, from which the gold fringe had been torn ; old sconces and candelabra, chairs of state, stools, couches, screens and fire-dogs, old silk hangings in strips and tatters on the walls, gilt leather covers and screens, all piled in confusion. One elegant room, traditionally called Queen Catherine's dressing or breakfast room, looked like a small temple with a domed ceiling. The figures on the walls were painted in fresco, and all the ornamentation touched in with gold ; the few articles of furniture were all antique, and there were several pictures on the ground. What a fortune for an old furniture collector in these days, and what an ideal place for ghosts ! One wonders if they were responsible for the absence of the gold fringes. The most painful part of the whole story is that at the time these old stores were discovered they would not have been appreciated at all, and would only have been looked upon as old rubbish.

In 1761 Somerset House was settled upon Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg in the event of her surviving George the Third, but in the meanwhile the want of room for public offices made it imperative that new ones should be built somewhere, and Somerset House and gardens presented a valuable and convenient site. An Act was obtained by which old Buckingham House, St. James's Park, was bought and settled on the Queen for life, and Somerset House went the way of nearly all the other old mansions on the bank of the river. It was replaced by the present one, built 1776 to 1780, from the designs of Sir William Chambers, a wonderfully fine building, the main courtyard and the terrace front being about the finest specimen of architecture still to be seen in London. It was finer still before the Embankment was made, when the terrace rose from the Thames at high water.

The time of Elizabeth, truly the Augustan Age, made its mark on London on Thames. The rise of the Drama dates from her reign, when Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Kit Marlowe, and Philip Massinger

among the authors, and Richard Burbage and Edward Alleyn among the actors, gave it an impetus which lifted it entirely above the level of the older miracle plays and mysteries. For the presentation of these dramas, to which Londoners flocked, theatres were erected, and many were to be seen along the banks of the Thames. Close to the Temple was Whitefriars Theatre; another was in Salisbury Court, and another in Dorset Gardens, called the Duke's; even the magnificent Hall of the Middle Temple was no stranger to the sock and buskin. In the city itself, within the liberty of the Blackfriars, where not even the great Lord Mayor could interfere with him, James Burbage, the father of Richard, erected a playhouse, one might almost say under royal sanction, for he had received a patent from Elizabeth, in 1574, to enrol certain other players to be called the Queen's servants. On Bankside there are other buildings in which, although ostensibly used for bull and bear baitings, stage-plays are acted—the Globe, quite close to the river, where Shakespeare and his fellows acted, and the Swan. Many of these were but rude structures; the one in Whitefriars was probably a barn or hall belonging to the suppressed convent of the Carmelites. The Globe was a hexagonal building of brick and timber, open to the weather except the part over the stage, which was thatched; the galleries round were probably under cover, but the "pit" was open to the sky. No wonder that, in 1613, in Shakespeare's lifetime, a piece of lighted paper blown from a cannon set fire to the thatch and it was burnt down. It was afterwards rebuilt with a tile roof, and not finally pulled down until 1644. The Bear Garden had a longer life, as it existed up to Charles the Second's reign, and Pepys visited it. It was a strange trait in the manners and customs of those days that persons of education should crowd to see a poor beast tethered and worried by dogs; royal personages were often present at the "sport," and took foreign ambassadors to see it. "The Bear" was also used for another brutalising exhibition—prize-fights, and not with gloves. One can imagine how busy the river must have looked with all the boats drawn up at the stairs, while a flag with a cross of St. George floated above the theatre, denoting that the play or exhibition was in progress. The watermen themselves often had fights with the butchers, and settled their differences at the "Bear." It was an age of marked contrasts; and when one thinks of the wit and learning of

many of the spectators, one would rather turn from these ruffianly exhibitions and dwell on the other side of the picture—

“What things have we seen
Done at the ‘Mermaid;’ heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame
As if that every man from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.”

During the reign of James the First and Charles the First the drama was well patronised; then came the Puritan reaction, and England was painted drab colour for a time, all plays and interludes interdicted, and play-actors treated as common vagrants. The Puritans were not likely to forgive or to forget Ben Jonson’s play of “Bartholomew Fair” and “Zeal of the Land Busy.” The Thames for a time saw no more of play-houses or theatres on its banks. This strict suppression under the rule of the “saints” only prepared the way for the licence of the Restoration, when the floodgates of vice and immorality were opened, and the drama became almost a byword among decent men and women.

CHAPTER IV.

IN THE DAYS OF THE STUARTS

Whitehall in its Glory—The Court of Charles the Second—Foreign Ambassadors, their Reception—Evelyn and Pepys—The Plague—The Great Fire—Rebuilding on the Banks—Charles's Proclamation—The Act for Rebuilding—The Proposed Quay from the Temple Stairs to the Tower—Wren's Survey of the Encroachments on this—Greenwich—Yacht Racing—The Dutch in the Thames—Lambeth Palace—Archbishop Juxon—Chelsea—The Hospital—Old Vauxhall—Death of Charles—Accession of James—The Seven Bishops—Arrival of William—Midnight Flight of the Queen and the Young Prince—Flight of James, and Return—Ordered to Ham House—Second Flight and Abdication—Arrival of William at Whitehall—The Dutch Guards—Mary returns to Whitehall—First Fire there—Mary's Death—Whitehall Burnt to the Ground—The Site let on Leases—The Reign of Anne—The New Aspect of London from the River—New Streets on Old Sites—Craven Street—Through the Bridge to Wapping—Riverside Population—Execution Dock—Old Taverns—The ex-Lord Chancellor Jefferies—Arrest and Death in the Tower.

NIGHT-TIME, but the sounds of rejoicing are in the air, and the river rolls along, reflecting a ruddy light. Whence this sudden joy in a city from which mirth and jollity have been banished for years? "Hence, loathed melancholy!" The light reflected in the water is from innumerable bonfires, and, like the distant shouting, proclaims that the rule of the Puritans is over, and that General Monk is about to restore the Monarchy. Evelyn says under the date February 11th, 1659-1660: "A signal day Monk marches to Whitehall, dissipates that nest of robbers bonfires at night, with ringing of bells and universal Jubilee," and on the 29th of May following, "This day his Majesty Charles the Second came to London after a sad and long exile and calamitous suffering both of the King and Church, being seventeen years. This was also his birthday, and with a triumph of above 20,000 horse and foote brandishing their swords and shouting with inexpressable joy, the wayes strew'd with flowers, the bells ringing, the streetes hung with

tapisserie, fountains running with wine : the Maior, Aldermen, and all the Companies in their liveries, Lords and nobles clad in cloth of silver, gold, and velvet, the windowes and balconies all set with ladies : trumpets, music, and myriads of people flocking even so far as Rochester, so that they were seven hours in passing the city even from 2 in the afternoon till 9 at night . . . nor so joyful a day and so bright ever seene in this nation . . .” thus he passed to Whitehall.

The King’s procession entered the city by London Bridge. Twenty-eight years later, his brother and successor crossed the Thames in a boat with few attendants, driven into exile by his outraged subjects. What a sequel to the joy which hailed the restoration of the dynasty ; like the Bourbons, the Stuarts had learnt nothing and had forgotten nothing.

Charles was no sooner at Whitehall than the old stairs and steps of this river-side palace swarmed again with life and animation, and the royal barges were constantly to be seen leaving the stairs to go up stream to Hampton Court and Windsor, or dropping down the river and through the Bridge to the Tower or to Greenwich, or to visit the fleet at Gravesend and Woolwich. Many are the entries in Pepys’ diary of these river excursions, when in a boat with Creed or Captain Cocke, or sometimes with his wife and Mercer, he drops down the river to Deptford. “By water to Whitehall” is also of constant recurrence.

Many of these brief notices of his life upon the water are minute and curious. “Whence by water to the office, through Bridge, being carried by him in oares that the other day rowed in a scull faster than my oares to the Tower, and I did give him 6*d*.”*

But the most interesting of all is the diarist’s description of the public entry of Queen Catherine into London, coming from Hampton Court by water ; he and Creed, after dining at an ordinary in Lombard Street, went down to the Steel Yard to get a boat, and from there all along Thames Street, but could not get one to take them to Whitehall, although he offered eight shillings ; so that they had to walk to Whitehall, and, having passed through Lord Sandwich’s lodgings to the bowling green, mounted up on to the top of the new Banqueting House there over the Thames—not Inigo Jones’ structure, be it observed—“which was a most pleasant place as any I could have got.”

* Which was the legal fare, unless Pepys gave him 6*d*. for himself.

He tells us that the show principally consisted of boats and barges, and that there were two pageants—one of a King and another of a Queen, with her maids of honour sitting about her feet very prettily, and he hears that the lady personating the Queen was Sir Richard Ford's daughter. "Anon came the King and Queen in a barge under a canopy, with 10,000 barges and boats, I think, for we could see no water for them nor discern the King or Queen, and so they landed at Whitehall Bridge, and the great guns on the other side went off." But what seems to have pleased him more than the show was that he saw Lady Castlemaine over against him on a piece of Whitehall, and that he saw her husband upon the same place walking up and down without taking any notice of one another, except that at his first entry he put off his hat and she made him a very civil salute. But a scaffolding fell down with all the people on it, and he was afraid that some were hurt, but fortunately only a child and that not seriously. Of all the ladies looking on, Lady Castlemaine was the only one who ran down among the common rabble to see what hurt was done, "which methought was noble." He finds great difficulty, through the crowd, in getting a boat at Palace Yard, and, stopping at the Old Swan Stairs, walks the rest of the way home.

On the night after the Queen's state entry there were fireworks on the river in front of Whitehall, but here Pepys is disappointing; for, waking up, as he says, with his head in a sad taking through the last night's drink, which he is sorry for, he goes out with Creed to drink his morning draft, "which he did give me in chocolate to settle my stomach;" then he goes home to enter up his diary, which he has not done for three days; and at night, while he is still occupied with it, he hears the noise of the chambers going off and other things of the fireworks which were then playing before the King on the Thames, and he wishes himself there, being sorry not to see them. Our forefathers were fond of noise, and these chambers or guns with blank charges were let off on every possible occasion. The discharge of rockets and the floating dragons vomiting showers of sparks must have been a pretty sight on the dark water of the river, with the picturesque buildings of the old Palace of Whitehall as a background, with all its river-front windows illuminated. Evelyn has no such distractions when he describes this same spectacle, and he gives a much better and more minute

account: "I was a spectator of that most magnificent triumph that ever floated on the Thames, considering the innumerable boats and vessels dressed and adorned with all imaginable pomp, but above all, the thrones, arches, pageants, and other representations, stately barges of the Lord Mayor and Companies, with various inventions, music and peales of ordnance, both from the vessels and from the shore, going to meet and conduct the new Queen from Hampton Court to Whitehall at the first time of her coming to Town. In my opinion it far exceeded all the Venetian 'Bucentoras,' &c., on the Ascension when they go to espouse the Adriatic. His Majesty and the Queen came in an antique-shaped open vessel covered with a state or canopy of cloth of gold made in form of a cupola supported with high Corinthian pillars wreathed with flowers, festoons, and garlands. I was in our new-built vessel sailing among them." Evelyn had visited Venice and seen the show to which he refers, and was able to make the comparison. This must have been one of the most glorious pageants ever seen upon the Thames.

Among the many brave shows and processions which the Thames has borne on its broad bosom, the state entries of foreign ambassadors into the capital are not among the least. It was the custom for foreign ambassadors, after landing at Dover, to proceed by road to Canterbury and then to Gravesend, where they embarked on a state barge, other state barges being provided for their retinue. They were met at Gravesend by the Lord Mayor and Sheriffs in their state barges, and also by those of some of the City Companies, and, thus escorted, they came up the river with flags flying and with music, and disembarked at the Tower Stairs. There they were met by some of the King's state coaches and conveyed through the city to Whitehall. No route could have been chosen better fitted to convey to the ambassador and his suite an idea of the wealth and beauty of this realm of England. The pleasant journey through one of the loveliest counties, the high state of culture of the fields and orchards, the old cathedral city embosomed in trees, the pleasant and peaceful port at Gravesend; then the journey up the river, past the innumerable craft and shipping and the King's fleet, or that part of it which happened to be moored in the river, the approach to London, the view of the old city with its towers and spires and the wonderful bridge, and the disembarkation under the frowning walls of the

grim fortress of the Tower—all these things combined must have given them no mean idea of England's wealth and England's power. Then the ride through the city to Whitehall, the density of the houses, the myriads of people gathered together to see them pass, and, finally, the splendour of the Court to which they were accredited, must have impressed them not a little, although they may have assumed, as some of them did, a stoical demeanour and seeming indifference. Quite early in the reign of Charles the Second, the Swedish Ambassador was received in this fashion, and unfortunately at the Tower Stairs a scene occurred which marred the peaceful character of these entries. It had been the custom for other ambassadors to be present at any new arrival, and there had been for long a rivalry between the ambassadors of His Catholic Majesty of Spain and His Most Christian Majesty of France which should take precedence after the King's coaches. The two ambassadors were the Baron de Vatteville for Spain and the Comte d'Estrades, Marshal of France, and it was well known beforehand that, on the arrival of the Swedish Ambassador, the two embassies intended to settle this question by force of arms. Each ambassador sent his coach well attended with an armed retinue. As this was a delicate matter in which the King could not very well meddle without taking sides for one or the other, he ordered that no Englishman should in any way interfere, but let them settle it themselves. He sent a strong escort of his guards and posted soldiers in the city, and the Lord Mayor called out the trained bands in expectation of a brawl, which actually took place, and led to much bloodshed and several deaths; for no sooner had the King's coach drawn up at the Stairs with the Swedish one next, than the Spaniards placed themselves immediately behind it. The French then tried to cut in, and were supported by 150 horse and foot, armed with muskets, carbines, and pistols, which they fired on the Spanish retinue. One of these, however, dexterously crawled under the horses of the French coach and hamstrung two of them and wounded a third, which, falling, hindered the coach from moving. The coachman was dragged from his box and one of the postilions fell, mortally wounded, into the arms of an Englishman who stepped out of the crowd to help him, and this gentleman was wounded in his turn by a Spaniard. Brickbats were freely thrown. This all took place on the wharf, and the fight continued

past the Bulwark Tower and up Tower Hill ; but the Spaniards held the position and the French horse had to retreat. Besides those of them who were slain by bullets on the wharf and near the Bulwark, there was a *valet de chambre* of the Spanish Ambassador and six more, and among them a poor English plasterer. Forty were wounded. It was some little time before the French coach was able to make a start, and it was then unable to retrieve the position and had to take a back place, although Monsieur d'Estrades had received positive injunctions from Louis the Fourteenth to claim precedence, and precipitate this unseemly fracas. With regard to the brickbats, Evelyn, who was asked by the King to make a careful and impartial inquiry into the case, reports that "bricks were thrown by his Majesty's subjects, but not until they were incensed by the wounds which they received from the shot which came in among them, by which some of them, 'tis said, are since dead, and they were forced to defend themselves with what they found at hand."

During the Great Plague, in 1665, the river was almost deserted, for many of the watermen had taken their wives and families in their wherries and other small craft and had moved up the river, where they remained until the plague ceased, lying on each side of the stream, close into the shore, and putting up small huts and tents on its banks. The river also proved a safeguard in another sense, for the shipping, which extended in rows, two and two and in some places three deep, right away down from the Pool to Long Reach, was not reached by the contagion except in one or two isolated cases close inshore. As there was very little business doing, whole families took refuge on them, and thus escaped. Some of the watermen were not so fortunate. Pepys tells us of one who rowed him from Greenwich to the nearest point from which he could reach the Navy Yard in Scotland Lane, and who was dead the next day, which frightened him for a time. He mentions also two others who carried his letters, and were struck down by the disease. It must be said to Pepys' credit that his vigilance and assiduity in the work of his office did not relax although many of his associates had fled.

Evelyn's description of the Fire of London, although perhaps not so full as those of some of his contemporaries, is interesting, as he went to Bankside in Southwark and viewed it from there. From that

place he saw all the houses from the bridge, all Thames Street, and upwards towards Cheapside down to the Three Cranes, burning. This was the second day of the fire. The next day he came again to the same place on foot from Deptford, and described the spectacle as awful: the noise, cracking, and thunder of the impetuous flames, the shrieking of women and children, the hurry of the people, and fall of "towers, houses, and churches was like an hideous storm. Here we saw the Thames covered with goods floating, all the barges and boats laden with what some had time and courage to save." Two miles of the city side of the river's bank and one mile in depth all one glowing furnace, was a sight the like of which the old river as it flowed on to the sea had never beheld before, though it witnessed many others from the time of the Romans 1600 years before.

Pepys also saw the ravages the fire was making from the river. First going up to the top of the Tower of London, he saw the houses at the bridge end on fire. This was on Monday, it had broken out the night before, and he is much alarmed for the safety of two of his acquaintances living on the bridge, poor little Michell and "our Sarah." So he takes a boat and goes through the bridge, and there sees this lamentable sight. Poor Michell's house as far as the Swan already burnt, and the fire running further, that in a very little time it gets as far as the Steel Yard while he is there, everybody endeavouring to remove their goods and flinging them into the river, or bringing them to lighters and barges that lay off, people staying in their houses to the last moment till the fire touched them, and then running into boats or clambering from one pair of stairs on the water-side to another; and he notes that the poor pigeons, as if loth to leave their houses, hovered about the windows till, their wings being burnt, they fell down. No one from what he could see was doing anything to quench it; men were only anxious to remove their goods and leave all to the fire. He sees the beautiful lofty spire of St. Laurence Pountney catch fire at the top—it was of timber and lead—and then burn till it fell down. He goes on to Whitehall, where evidently the extent of the disaster was not fully known, sees the King, and tells both him and the Duke of York, and says that unless orders are given at once to pull down the houses nothing can stop it. They are both much troubled at

the news, and he receives at once the King's command to go to the Lord Mayor and command him to spare no houses, and the Duke of York tells him that if the Lord Mayor wants any soldiers he shall have them. This plan fails through the Lord Mayor losing his head and crying like a fainting woman, "Lord! what can I do? I am spent, people will not obey me." He takes a boat again at St. Paul's Wharf and takes in Mr. Carcasse and his brother, and carries them below and above the bridge. He sees the King's barge with the King and Duke of York on board, and goes with them to Queenhithe. The King commands the destruction of houses, but little was or could be done. The fire gained ground rapidly, and the wind carrying the flames into the city, they could not see from the water-side what damage was being done there. The river was full of lighters and boats taking in goods, and good goods swimming in the water; he notices that hardly one lighter or boat out of three had the goods of a house in it. One he sees with a pair of virginalls in it, a sort of spinet, that appealed to his musical tastes. From there he goes back to Whitehall to meet his wife at St. James's Park, and with her and Creed and another man and his wife, takes boat and goes on the water again, and as near to the fire as they could for smoke with their faces to the wind, and almost burnt with the showers of sparks and fire-drops. When they could endure it no longer they went to a little alehouse on Bankside, opposite to the Three Cranes, and there stayed until it was dark and saw the flames, not like an ordinary flame, but a malicious flame in one entire arch of fire; it made him weep to see it. They go home and pack up all their valuables, and send them in a cart to Sir W. Rider's at Bednall Green. The fire had actually caught All Hallows, Barking, at the bottom of Seething Lane, where Pepys lived. He goes to Whitehall by boat on the 6th of September, and with his remarks on the sad appearance of the river, no houses or churches near it as far as the Temple, Pepys' account concludes.

After the Great Fire a grand opportunity was missed for embanking the river and keeping the houses some distance back from the water. There is little doubt that both Evelyn and Wren had suggested this, as in the proclamation issued by the King these words occur: "We do resolve and declare that there shall be a fair key or wharf on all the

river side ; that no house shall be erected within so many feet of the river ;” and then, further, “that these buildings shall be no otherwise than fair structures for the ornament of the city, and that no brewers, dyers, or sugar-bakers shall be allowed to carry on their trades, which, by their continual smoke, contribute much to the unhealthfulness of adjacent places in or near this line.” This proclamation was issued seven days after the fire, and very shortly after an Act of Parliament was passed, which, among other good rules, ordering that all new buildings should be of brick or stone, enacted that a spacious wharf, forty feet in breadth, should extend by the river-side from “Tower Wharf to the Temple Stairs.” The coal tax was then put on to enable the city to carry out this scheme ; and that an Act so useful and so conducive to the future appearance of the city should have been allowed to remain a dead letter is extraordinary. What a magnificent appearance the riverside would have presented, and how much expense it would have saved for the ratepayers of the future, who have yet to complete the unfinished Victoria Embankment through the city to the Tower or beyond. Only four years after the passing of this Act we already hear of the utter disregard of it. A petition is laid before the Council at Whitehall from a Captain Will Clarke and others, setting forth that, after having ordered their several buildings near London Bridge in accordance with its provisions, and built their new water-house there, it will be a great detriment to them unless the wharf is continued. That, before the fire, a common lay-stall and necessary house stood there, which are being now rebuilt, notwithstanding that the petitioners had set back their building, and the Surveyor-General had ordered that these obstructions should be forborne. Nevertheless, divers persons, including the Alderman of the Ward, for their private convenience, have begun again the same lay-stall, and so thereby poison the water-house, annoy the passengers on the Thames, and be otherwise infectious to the city.” The Council, at which were present the King’s most excellent Majesty, the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, the Lord Chamberlain, the Earls of Ogle, Bridgewater, Sandwich, Craven, and Lauderdale, Lords Arlington and Ashley, Mr. Treasurer, Mr. Secretary Trevor, and Sir John Duncombe, ordered that Christopher Wren, Esq., the Surveyor-General, do speedily survey the same and report to his Majesty in Council how he finds the

same. Wren accordingly reported that, in accordance with this order of the 25th of January, 1670, he had surveyed the same key from the Temple proceeding all along the wharf to London Bridge, and that the circumstances were as represented; and, furthermore, that this space had been all along continually encroached upon. Innumerable sheds had been built. Piles of faggots, heaps of coals, and bricks encumbered the area; lay-stalls, houses of office, and warehouses were built on the forty feet; and two towers of Baynard's Castle had not only been left, but had been fitted up as dwelling houses.

The list is too long for insertion here, but it gives a most minute description of the buildings on the bank of the river from the Temple to London Bridge, all of which infringed upon this space, and is, with the Council order, in the handwriting of Sir Christopher Wren, or Mr. Wren, as he was then. With the exception of another order, in which the King exempts Paul's Wharf from the forty foot way for the greater convenience for the passage of stone and other materials for the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral, there is no further mention or order made referring to this projected quay, or even to the removal of the incumbrances noted by Wren; it seems quietly to have been dropped so far as the Council Orders are concerned. The original book, most of it in the handwriting of Sir Christopher, is preserved in the Library of the Soane Museum. The "water-house" referred to was a machine for raising water from the Thames for the use of the City, which stood at the north end of the Bridge, and was first erected by Peter Morice, a Dutchman, in 1582; it forced water up to the height of Gracechurch Street. It was afterwards much elaborated and extended, and was supposed to excel the famous machine at Marly le Roy, for it raised 46,896 hogshead a day to the height of 120 feet. Some more of the arches further to the south had also been utilised in Elizabeth's reign to contain mills and water-wheels for grinding corn in order that the city might supply the poor with meal at a reasonable rate in times of scarcity. Both Evelyn and Wren agreed that all these obstructions to the water way ought to be removed, and the houses on the Bridge also taken down, by which it would be possible to widen the roadway, and by substituting a handsome balustrade for the walls and stone parapets, give to

passengers an uninterrupted view up and down the river. Long leases granted by the corporation and vested interests of private individuals proved too strong, and it was not until nearly a century afterwards that the houses on the Bridge were finally removed. In the great fire about half of the houses were burnt, but the fire stopped at one of the openings made between the houses, and did not reach the Southwark side. The great fire in Southwark did not occur until some years after, when the Borough nearly shared the fate of the City.

From old views of the bridge, especially those by Hollar and Visscher, one sees how terribly these old houses overhung the stream, all sorts of excrescences projecting from them, not only over the arches but also over the starlings. A pleasant legend of heroic devotion has invested them with a halo of romance. The tale, which has been often told, is this: that a nurse with an infant child was leaning out of one of these overhanging windows, and the child, making a sudden spring, fell from her arms into the swift current below; that this infant was the only child and daughter of a rich citizen, whose apprentice witnessing the catastrophe leapt into the stream and succeeded in saving the child's life; that when she had grown up, her father, out of gratitude, gave her in marriage to the man who in his youth had imperilled his life to save her; and that he grew to be very wealthy and the ancestor of a famous ducal family. The legend is so pretty that one does not care to examine into the truth of it. Although the old arches and swift stream may have been the making of one ducal family, they nearly caused the extinction of another Duke, although not of his family. On the 8th of November, 1429, the Duke of Norfolk, with many a gentleman, squire, and yeoman, took his barge at St. Mary Overie's between four and five in the evening and purposed to pass through London Bridge, where the aforesaid barge through misgovernment of the man steering, fell upon the piles and was upset; which was the cause of the spilling of many a gentleman and others to their cost. But, by God's help, the Duke and two or three persons seeing the danger leapt upon the piles and so were saved, through the help of them that were above upon the bridge, casting down ropes and so bringing them up safely.

There is another anecdote in which a duchess is the heroine, to be found in *Boswell* (Croker's ed. 1848, vol. 4, p. 156). Boswell says that he once had the honour of being on a party of pleasure with the Duke and Duchess of York down the river, and "we were about to land to rejoin the barge on the other side of the Bridge. The Duchess wanted to know why, and was told of the danger, and she refused to get out of the barge, and insisted upon shooting the Bridge, but we shipped a good deal of water and all got very wet, but the Duchess showed neither alarm or regret."

Yacht racing was not unknown on the river in the reign of easy-going, pleasure-loving King Charles II. Evelyn tells us that he sailed with his Majesty on October 1st, 1661, "in one of his 'Yatchts,' or pleasure-boats, vessels not known here till the Dutch East India Company presented that curious piece to the King, being very excellent sailing vessels." It was on a wager between his other new pleasure-boat built frigate-like, and one of the Duke of York's; the wager 100*l.*, the race from Greenwich to Gravesend and back. The King lost it going, the wind being very contrary, but saved stakes in returning. There were a number of noble persons and lords on board, his Majesty sometimes steering himself. His own barge and Kitchen barge attended. "I breakfasted with the King on his return in the smaller vessel, he being pleased to take me and only four more who were noblemen with him; but dined in his 'yacht,' where we all ate together with his Majesty." It was on this occasion that the King commanded him to draw up the matter of the encounter between the French and Spanish Ambassadors, and to consult with all the witnesses of the affray.

But amidst all the mirth and jollity at Whitehall, sinister sounds, the booming of cannon, are plainly heard on the Thames. Evelyn hears them when walking in his garden at Sayes Court, Deptford, on the 1st of June, 1666, and mounts and rides off to Rochester, and the next day towards the Downs and sea coast, but meeting with the captain of a frigate, and learning from him that nothing had been heard at Deal, returns home. On the 2nd of June Pepys hears them plainly when walking in the park at Greenwich. After ordering his dinner, a dish of steaks, he walks to the water-side, and seeing the

King and the Duke come down in their barge to Greenwich, he goes to them and tells them of what he has been doing, and they go up the park to hear the guns of the fleet go off. This preliminary engagement, which was at first hailed as a victory, turned out to be rather a disaster, for although the Dutch ships retreated, our own were fearfully shattered, and Evelyn sees at Sheerness the sad spectacle of nearly half of our navy more like wrecks than ships. We know the sequel, how soon after the great Fire, the Dutch entered the Thames, sailed up to Chatham, burnt many of our best men of war, and blockaded the mouth of the river up as far as the Hope, and great was the consternation and the fear of their coming up to London. So nervous had the citizens become that when some chips and old ropes and other disused stores caught fire at Deptford and made a blaze, they thought the Dutch were there. Scenes of the wildest confusion prevailed in London for a time, and people began to move their valuables, in hourly expectation of finding the enemy in possession of the streets. The scare did not last long, for after one or two indecisive engagements, the Duke of Albemarle defeated De Ruyter on the 25th of July, 1666, and we hear no more of the Dutch in the Thames.

As we turn to leave the river below bridge a glance must be directed to Greenwich, which at this period is so often mentioned both by Evelyn and Pepys, though neither has much to say about the old palace on the banks of the river. Even the Queen's House, a more recent fabric than the ancient structure, and then belonging to Henrietta Maria, the Queen Dowager, does not seem to have been occupied by her. It still stands. The predilection which the various Kings and Queens who have ruled this little island set in the silver sea had for the banks of the Thames is very remarkable. They had palaces at Greenwich (or Placentia), the Tower, Bridewell, Whitehall, Westminster, Chelsea, Kew, Richmond (or Sheen), Hampton Court, Oatlands, and last, but not least, at Windsor, and whatever attraction these various palaces possessed, one of them must undoubtedly have been their propinquity to this lovely river and its quiet Arcadian beauty. Certainly one of the most favoured was Greenwich, from the time of Edward I. to that of Charles II. Facing the river, with a terrace in front, from which could be seen the stately vessels with

their high and carved poops passing and repassing to and from the port of London, it had at the back a splendid park stretching up the sides of a fairly steep hill, from which a lovely prospect could be obtained of the windings of the river and the wide stretch of the Essex marshes, reaching to the low, wooded hills of Epping, which closed the view to the north. It must have been a pleasant prospect that one could have had in those days from the palace and park. Henry IV. dates his will from it in 1408. Henry V. granted it first to Thomas Beaufort, Duke of Exeter, who died there in 1417; and soon after to Humphry, Duke of Gloucester, who extended both the building and park, and called it "Placentia," or "my manor of Pleasaunce." It must have been rightly named. He built also a high tower to command a more extensive view on the site of what is now the observatory. After his death in 1447 it again reverted to the crown. Edward IV. was very often here, and settled it on his queen, Elizabeth of York; he made extensive alterations and additions to the original structure, and here the marriage of Richard, Duke of York, and Anne Mowbray was celebrated with great splendour. Henry VII. was here very often, and it was in this palace that his second son, afterwards Henry VIII., and Edmund Tudor, Duke of Somerset, were both born. It was Henry VIII. who altered the river front, rebuilding it in red brick with towers and quaint oriels and gables. During his reign, Greenwich was frequently the abode of the Court, and the scene of many a pageant and State ceremony, when the river must have been alive with state barges and boats. It was here he married Catherine of Arragon in 1510. Queen Mary was born here in 1515, and in the same year his sister, the Queen Dowager of France, was married here to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk. Anne Boleyn came from Greenwich with a grand state procession of barges to London on her way to her coronation at Westminster. Queen Elizabeth was born here, September 7th, 1533, and that little shadow of a king, Edward VI., died here. During the long reign of Elizabeth, it was the constant scene of Court revels, masquerades, and joustings; and Hentzner, a German traveller in 1598, gives a most vivid description of Queen Elizabeth's Court at Greenwich, and of the extraordinary state and magnificence with which she surrounded herself, describing the Queen's dress and wonderful jewels,

and not omitting even the red wig and the black teeth. She was last here in 1600, and her successor, James I., was here in 1605. He settled the palace for life on Anne of Denmark, who commenced the building afterwards finished by Henrietta Maria, and called the Queen's House.

During the Commonwealth it was first settled by the House of Commons on the Lord Protector, but there being no money for repairs, in the following year it was ordered by the House that Greenwich House with its park and lands should be sold for ready money. Only some portions, however, of the land were sold, and another attempt was made to settle it on Cromwell. At the Restoration Henry, Earl of St. Albans, was made Keeper ; but in the meanwhile the old palace had gone from bad to worse, and was so decayed that Charles II. ordered its destruction, intending to build a new palace on the site. One wing of this was built, but nothing further was done in the matter either during the rest of his reign, or that of his brother James II.

In the reign of William and Mary it was decided to turn this unfinished wing of Charles's palace into a hospital for sick and disabled seamen, and a public subscription was opened, but this only realised £8000. Sir Christopher Wren contributed his time, labour, and skill, and the building as it stands may truly be attributed to him ; for Hawksmoor and others who continued it only carried out his first idea. The scheme was a magnificent one, and was supposed, so far as the hospital was concerned, to have originated with Mary. The altered conditions of living and many other circumstances make one rather fear for the future of it. A utilitarian age finds other ways of employing charitable funds, and both Greenwich and Chelsea are voted "out of date ;" but when one travels up the river and catches sight of the domes and porticoes of Wren's superb building glistening in the sunlight, with the wooded hill at its back, one can but cherish an ardent hope that there it may remain for many a long day.

Now, on our way back, we see the burnt City rapidly rising from its ashes, and brick and stone flat-fronted buildings replacing the ancient half-timbered and gabled houses of mediæval London. On the Surrey side there is not so much change, for although the river-bank is much built on, one still sees behind the houses the low flat fields, the remains of the ancient marshes. At Lambeth Palace the great hall has

had to be rebuilt. The palace was sold during the Commonwealth, and Scott the regicide and another who bought it of the Parliament, had destroyed the Great Hall for the sake of the building materials, and desecrated the chapel, exhuming the body of Archbishop Parker and burying it under a dunghill. Archbishop Juxon on his nomination to the Primacy had found it almost a roofless ruin, and it is to him we owe the present Great Hall, now used as the Library.

The opposite shore along Millbank, has one or two fine houses recently built. At Chelsea, the old college has been given by the King to the newly founded Royal Society, but the gift being rather of the nature of a white elephant they have sold it to Sir Stephen Fox, and on the site a splendid hospital for disabled soldiers has been built, facing the river, with extensive grounds. Whoever it was that first suggested this idea to Charles II. great credit is due to the author of the scheme. Some people say it was Mistress Eleanor Gwyn, who had been troubled at the sight of so many poor maimed soldiers begging in the streets. Others say it was Sir Stephen Fox, who was a large contributor. Sir Christopher Wren was the architect, as he was also of the kindred Hospital at Greenwich for sailors. Perhaps Charles was only imitating his cousin, Louis the Fourteenth, who had founded the "Invalides" in Paris; the Merry Monarch not wishing to be outdone in good works any more than in the vicious example set to their courts and people by both Monarchs. The foundation stone was laid in 1681. Charles did not live to see the building finished, but James, his brother, during his short and inglorious reign, carried on the work. It was finally completed in the reign of William and Mary, and the red-coated pensioners have been a familiar sight to Londoners ever since. Modern ideas have rather interfered with this foundation, as they have at Greenwich; but let us hope that, no matter what may be now the increased value of the site—the moving spring in all these alterations and tamperings with ancient foundations—Old Chelsea Hospital may be spared to us for many a long day.

On the opposite bank of the river was Old Vauxhall. This favourite resort had been popular for some years and evidently some time before Pepys's visit, as he mentions that he had not been there for some time. Pepys spells it "Foxhall." There seem to have been two separate places

of entertainment: the Old Spring Garden and the New. Early in the reign of Charles II., the gardens are described as having green or turf walks and gravel walks and squares filled with roses, beans, and asparagus, and the divisions made by gooseberry hedges. It was on the 29th of May, the King's birthday, that Mr. and Mrs. Pepys, the two maids and the boy, took a boat and went first to the Old Spring garden. There they walked about, and the maids gathered pinks, but finding the prices charged for refreshments preposterously high, they left without any notice being taken and went to the New Spring garden, which Pepys says far exceeded the other, and they walked about there and the boy crept under the hedges and got a lot of roses. They did get something to eat there, some cakes and powdered beef and ale, and after a long walk passed out of doors as they did in the other place, no one noticing them—he does not say if he paid for his refreshments, he certainly did not for the roses—and so home again by water. The Old Spring garden seems to have been ultimately leased to Sir Samuel Morland, who built a fine house on the site about 1675. During the reign of Charles II., Vauxhall enjoyed a considerable amount of popularity, and there are constant references to it; its subsequent history will be related in the next chapter.

Whitehall during the reign of this pleasure-loving king was the constant scene of revelry and open gambling and general dissoluteness. No wonder that grave and discreet persons like Evelyn shook their heads at all this mis-government and the bad example set by the Court. In the very midst of it all Charles was stricken with apoplexy, and to quote the words of Evelyn—who the Sunday before had witnessed the scene of inexpressible luxury in that glorious gallery at Whitehall, the tables heaped with gold, and the King surrounded by shameless women, the Clevelands, Portsmouths, and Mazarins—"six days after all was in the dust." On the accession of James II., Whitehall was still the favourite palace, for the visits of the Court to Windsor and Hampton Court were but of short duration. Outwardly the face of the whole Court became more solemn and decorous; the new queen, Mary Beatrix of Modena, was of a more commanding appearance and statelier manner than Catherine of Braganza. Although James was an avowed Papist, the oaths he had taken to maintain the Church of the kingdom lulled every one into a

security that the King would respect them. But events soon showed in what light the King regarded them. The most memorable event was the trial and acquittal of the Seven Bishops, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishops of Ely, Chichester, St. Asaph, Bristol, Peterborough, and Bath and Wells. They had refused to give bail, as against the privilege of their peerage, and were committed to the Tower. Never had the river seen such an extraordinary sight. They were taken from Westminster in a barge, and the news having spread, the river was covered with spectators, and their progress was more like a triumphal procession than a committal. The sympathy of all was excited on their behalf, and both in passing from the court to the barge at Westminster, and again on its arrival at the Tower, they were received with every mark of honour and respect; crowds going down on their knees begging their blessing and praying for them. Two days afterwards bells were ringing and the Tower ordnance firing for the birth of a Prince at St. James's Palace. This was on the 10th of June, 1688, on the 15th the trial of the Bishops began, and on the 29th they were formally acquitted. The same scene was presented again, a lane of people from the King's Bench to the water-side on their knees, as they passed and repassed, to beg their blessing. Bonfires were lighted all over London, and all the bells rung; the universal rejoicing reached even the army which the King had collected at Hounslow to menace London, and the soldiers shouted for joy.

Great was the consternation among the King's advisers when the news arrived that William of Orange had actually landed at Torbay. It was no Monmouth rising this time, and James found no comfort and no support. The Princess Anne, under the guidance of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, had secretly left Whitehall; every hour brought news of fresh desertions, and as Evelyn says, Whitehall was in so panic a fear that he could not have believed it possible. The Court favourites, priests and Jesuits, began to disperse. It was about this time, on a cold night in December, that the river witnessed a strange sight; the flight of a Queen of England with an infant Prince of Wales. The night was exceedingly dark, and the palace all sombre, with scarcely one lighted window to cast a reflection in the stream, when a boat pushed off from the Privy garden stairs, with a few closely-muffled figures bending

their heads against the squalls of rain and wind which pitilessly swept across the river—Mary of Modena, James Prince of Wales, a lady in attendance, the Prince's wet-nurse, and the Count de Lauzun. The tide was running strong, and the stream difficult to cross; at last they arrived at Lambeth, where there was to have been a coach, but no coach was there, and the Queen and the infant Prince and her attendants had to crouch beneath the trees and ivy overhanging the wall of the Archbishop's garden until the Count de Lauzun had found the driver of the coach, asleep under shelter, and they were able to resume their journey to the coast, and finally to reach France and the Court of the King's cousin, Louis XIV.

James still remained at Whitehall, vainly endeavouring to find some means of escape out of his difficulties, and at last determined to quit the kingdom; but having to put in at Faversham for ballast was recognised and rather rudely treated. He had to return to Whitehall and open negotiations again with William, who sent word from Windsor that his guards were to be quartered about the palace and city, and that James must retire to some distant place. James again took flight, and got as far as Rochester, but was persuaded to return, and on Sunday goes publicly to Mass, and dines in public, a Jesuit saying grace (Evelyn was present and tells the tale). At the Council he refused to assent to any of William's proposals, and then Evelyn sees the King take barge to go to Gravesend. William arrives and fills both St. James's and Whitehall with his Dutch guards and all the world goes to see the Prince at St. James's. Evelyn describes him as very stately, serious and reserved, a demeanour from which he seems never to have departed. It was on this last memorable journey of James to Gravesend that the Great Seal of England was thrown into the Thames, to be afterwards fished out again.

William's consort, Mary the Second, did not arrive until some weeks afterwards, on February 12th, 1689. She and her taciturn husband were proclaimed Queen and King the next day. Evelyn expresses himself as rather shocked at Mary's conduct. He expected she would have shown some seeming reluctance in assuming her father's crown, but she came into Whitehall laughing and jolly as to a wedding, so as to seem quite transported. She rose early the next morning, and in her undress before

her women were up, went about from room to room to see the convenience of Whitehall, lay in the same bed and apartment in which the late Queen lay, and within a night or two sat down to play at bassett as the Queen her predecessor had done. This passage in Evelyn's diary requires a little explanation, because at first sight one would have thought that Mary would have been quite conversant with the palace at Whitehall; but it so happened that James II. had rebuilt partly, if not wholly, the Queen's apartments there, facing south, along one side of the Privy Garden, and had added a new chapel as part of the suite, with a grand marble altar-piece, and a gorgeous ceiling painted by Verrio, who also painted the ceilings of the state apartments of the Queen. All this part of the palace was entirely new to Mary, and hence her curiosity, which under the circumstances was pardonable.

On the night of April 10th, 1691, a sudden and terrible fire broke out in the palace and burnt down all the buildings over the Stone Gallery at Whitehall to the water-side, beginning at the apartment of the late Duchess of Portsmouth, which had been pulled down and rebuilt no less than three times to please her. This fire must evidently have damaged the palace considerably, but none of the state rooms seem to have suffered. Apparently little or nothing was done towards repairing this damage. William disliked Whitehall, and when in London preferred Kensington Palace, which he had built from Wren's designs.

In 1694 Mary the Second died there of smallpox, on the 28th of December, and on the 24th of the following January lay in state at Whitehall, but she was not finally buried at Westminster until the 5th of March. That sad spectacle seems to have been the last that the old Palace of Whitehall witnessed, for the Thames was not much longer to reflect on its waters those ancient walls and roofs. When it perished, of all the series of palaces which had adorned the river banks none remained but Hampton Court and Windsor. Evelyn's description unfortunately gives us no details, simply under the date of January 2nd, 1698, "Whitehall burnt! nothing but walls and ruins left." Only Inigo Jones's proud banqueting house, the fragment of a design which would have made Whitehall the finest palace of Europe, still stands to remind us of what might have been.

Some buildings in Scotland Yard and some on the opposite side of

the street on the Park side, with the Holbein Gate, were the only portions of the old Palace of Whitehall which escaped. Fisher's plan of the Palace, dated 1680 on Vertue's engraving of it, but probably earlier, shows us a complicated nest of buildings most irregularly placed round small courtyards and areas. No wonder the fire made such havoc in so short a time. After this disaster, in which so many beautiful works of art and so much costly furniture perished, the Court of our Kings was removed to St. James' Palace, and the river-side was almost deserted by them. Greenwich, the Tower, Somerset House, Whitehall, Westminster, and Richmond, all ceased to exist as palaces. Kew, Hampton Court, and Windsor alone remain, and of these the first two have ceased to be the actual residences of our sovereigns. The site of the burnt palace was let out on leases to various members of the aristocracy, and Whitehall Gardens, Whitehall Place, Fife House, Carrington House, Scotland Yard, Buccleugh House, Richmond Terrace, and, more recently, Whitehall Court and Whitehall Avenue, now cover the site of this once famous pile.

During the reign of Anne, London on Thames assumes quite a new aspect. The new Cathedral of St. Paul is now complete, and, with its wondrous dome and western towers high above all other buildings, dominates the city. Around it are numerous towers and spires of the parish churches, all, like St. Paul's, from the hand of Sir Christopher Wren. A wonderful sight the City must have presented then, before ugly warehouses and railway sheds intercepted this view. Along the Strand only three or four remain of all those stately houses on the bank of the river—the Temple, Somerset House, portions of the Savoy and Northumberland House. Streets bearing the names of the former owners now mark the sites. They are well inhabited by people of condition.

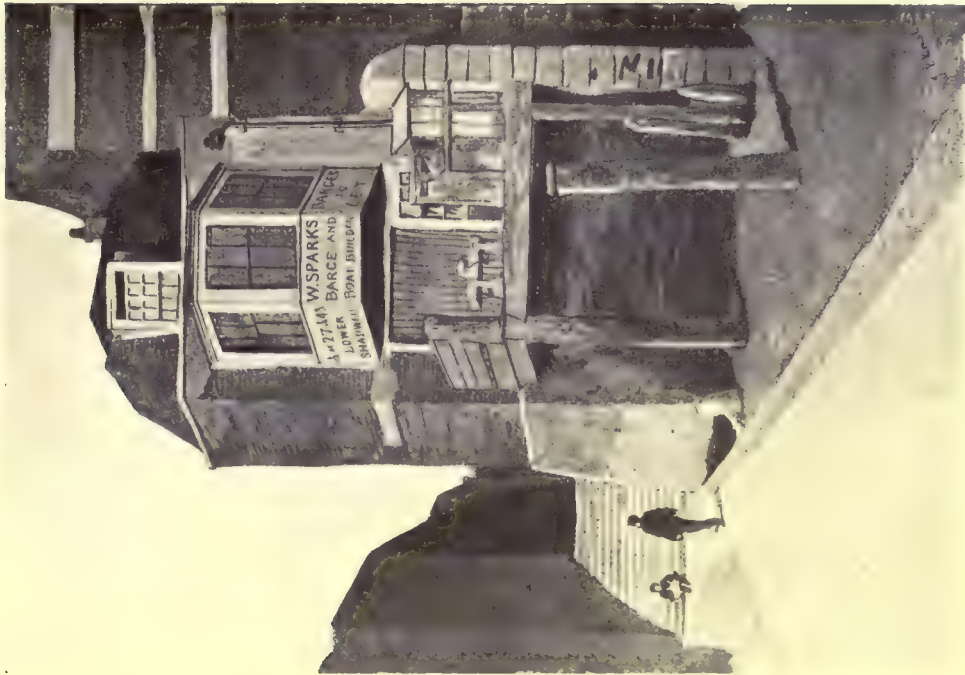
The bridge is still encumbered with houses; adjoining it is Fishmongers' Hall which has been rebuilt after the Great Fire, a handsome structure of red brick, with a small garden between it and the river. The rebuilding of London Bridge and its removal to a position further west caused the demolition of this old Hall, and the new one stands on the west side of the approach to the present bridge. To the east is the newly-built Custom House, and within the enclosure of



GUN DOCK. From a drawing by T. Rowlandson, in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



THE TURK'S HEAD, WAPPING. From a drawing by J. T. Wilson,
in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



STONE STAIRS, RAUCLIFFE. From a drawing by J. P. Emslie
in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



THE OLD SWAN AT CHELSEA, WITH THE RACE FOR COAT AND BADGE. From a drawing by T. Rowlandson. British Museum.



THAMES WAIERMEN. *From a tinted etching by J. A. Atkinson,
in the collection of Mr. Gardner.*



OLD SOMERSET STAIRS. *From a drawing by Paul Sandby, in the collection of Mr. Gardner.*

the Tower one sees a huge storehouse almost as prominent at the White Tower itself. The old fringe of houses along the shore has become much denser ; past St. Catherine's and all along Wapping to Shadwell, Ratcliff, and Limehouse, the population has become very thick, for here, moored along the banks and in the stream, are numerous ships trading to all parts of the world, from the stately East Indiamen to the small coasting schooners and frigates, and colliers bringing sea-coal. Wapping itself is given up entirely to seamen and those who supply them with stores and other necessities. How quaint many of these old taverns look, built end on to the river, with open galleries and balconies alive with sailors and those that go down to the sea in ships ! and here they drink and talk of the wonders they have seen in the great waters, and spin many a long yarn, and get together crews for another voyage. The neighbourhood is a dangerous one, for the press-gang are always very busy snapping up likely subjects for the Queen's Navy. All along this bank smuggling is extensively practised, and many of these public-houses have trap-doors and cellars artfully concealed, where many a keg of Nantz or Hollands find a temporary abode. And it also has its tragedies, for here is Execution Dock, where they hang pirates and sea-rovers or bold buccaneers on a gibbet at low-water mark, and there they are left until three tides have overflowed them. This place of ill omen has been in existence ever since the reign of Henry the Sixth. Sometimes the malefactors after execution were hung in chains and placed in prominent places on the banks at Bugsby's Hole, Blackwall, where their swaying bodies and creaking chains might be seen by sailors as a ghastly warning.

" Then, fair Thames,
 Queen of fresh water, famous through the world,
 And not the least through us, whose double tides
 Must overflow our bodies ; being dead
 May thy clear waves our scandals wash away,
 But keep our valours living."

Old Play : HEYWOOD AND ROWLEY, 1655.

It was here in Wapping that, after James the Second's flight, Lord Chancellor Jefferies concealed himself, disguised as a common sailor, in a small ale-house called the " Red Cow," in Anchor and Hope Alley, hard by King Edward's Stairs. It was his intention to have

escaped abroad, but in an unguarded moment he looked out of one of the windows, and was recognised by a Chancery clerk. Any one having once seen that terrible face could never forget it. He immediately raised a hue and cry, and the house was surrounded and the ex-Lord Chancellor arrested. Such was the fury of the mob that he was nearly torn to pieces, and, had it not been for the King's officers, who shielded him, would scarcely have escaped instant death. He was safely lodged in the Tower, where he subsequently died, as some say, from the effects of the violence of the mob, but really from stone, from which he had cruelly suffered for some years. The laws at that time were cruel, and, as judge, he never mitigated one atom of their severity. He simply administered them as they were, but his habit of browbeating witnesses, and his violent conduct generally on the bench, have branded his name with infamy.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

Accession of the House of Hanover—Lord Mayor's Procession by Water—The Stuart Rising and the Tower—George I. visits Limehouse—Illuminations—Visits Ranelagh House—Handel—Doggett's Coat and Badge—The Company of Watermen—Statutes for their Regulation—Addison and Sir Roger de Coverley—A Trip to Vauxhall—Manners and Customs of the Watermen—Places of Entertainment on the River—Cherry Gardens—Cuper's or Cupid's Garden—Vaux Hall—Horace Walpole—Ranelagh—Chelsea—Cremorne—Battersea—The Red House—The Folly—Stairs in 1707 and in 1856—Probable Extinction of the Folly Young Waterman.

THE death of Queen Anne on August 1st, 1714, at Kensington Palace, once more changed the aspect of political affairs, but George Louis of Brunswick's accession to the throne and his reign of thirteen years had very little influence, either on the appearance of the city or that of the river. There was still only the one bridge, and notwithstanding the loss of the riverside palace at Whitehall, and the removal of the Court to St. James's and Kensington, the watermen with their wherries and skiffs were still much in demand. The Lord Mayor in his State barge and the twelve great Companies in theirs, with all the pomp and pageantry of civic splendour, accompanied by bands of music and innumerable other boats and barges, made their annual procession to the Law Courts at Westminster on Lord Mayor's day, returning to Queenhithe or Blackfriars where they had embarked. The Stationers' Company in their barge on the same occasion also paid an annual visit to their patron, the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth, and presented their almanacs to his Grace. But very few other pageants were now seen on the river, and it was as dull as the Court, under a king who could not speak a word of English, and who disliked his new subjects quite as much as they disliked him.

After the suppression of the Stuart rising in 1715, the Tower was

crammed with the adherents of the fallen dynasty, and so were the other prisons of Newgate, the Fleet, and the Marshalsea. The block and axe were brought out again, and the aspect from the river of Tower Hill black with the innumerable crowd of spectators on foot and others in newly erected wooden galleries and at the windows of all the houses round, where a view of the raised scaffold could be obtained, must indeed have been a sad and strange sight. George I. had passed the Tower not long before on an excursion down the river. On the 22nd of August, 1715, the King, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and a numerous party of nobility, went, with music on board their barges, from Whitehall, the old Privy Stairs there being still kept intact, to Limehouse. When they returned in the evening, the captains of the shipping in the river suspended lanterns in their rigging, and the houses on both banks were illuminated; an incredible number of boats filled with spectators attended the Royal party, and cannon were repeatedly fired from the Tower wharf during the day and evening. In 1717 there was another grand aquatic procession from the stairs at Whitehall, when the King, accompanied by the Duchess of Newcastle, Lady Godolphin, "Madam" Kilmanseck, and the Earl of Orkney, went in the evening in an open barge to Chelsea. As they floated up with the tide, surrounded by thousands of boats, fifty performers in a City barge serenaded his Majesty, and played a piece of Handel's composed expressly for the occasion, with which he was so enraptured that it was repeated three times. At eleven o'clock at night the barge reached Chelsea, where the King landed and proceeded to the mansion of Lady Catherine Jones, daughter of the Earl of Ranelagh, where he supped and was further entertained by a concert until two in the morning. The piece composed by Handel is supposed to have been the famous Water Music. Handel had come over in 1712, and Queen Anne was so pleased with his music that she requested him to stay and take the leadership of the Opera, which he did, although he was under contract to return to Hanover. This naturally provoked the anger of the Court there, and when George succeeded to the crown, Handel was rather afraid of meeting him, but this timely compliment disarmed the King's anger, and he was restored to favour. The Princess of Wales, Caroline of Anspach, is said to have frequently hired the common watermen to row her about on the same

part of the river, and to have once boarded a West-country barge and partaken with the men of their homely fare of salt pork and bread, distributing a tenfold equivalent of guineas. Both the Prince and Princess, whom the King called "*cette diablesse*," did as much as lay in their power to make themselves popular, which the King never attempted to do, and the relations between father and son were very much strained.

The year 1716 witnessed the first race for Doggett's coat and badge, rowed by six young watermen who had just completed their apprenticeship. Doggett, who was a well-known Irish comedian, and an enthusiastic supporter of the Hanoverian dynasty, left a certain sum in trust for the purchase of the prize, an "orange" coloured coat with a silver badge on which the horse of the House of Hanover was embossed in high relief. The race was from Old Swan Stairs, by London Bridge, to the Old Swan at Chelsea. Thomas Doggett, who was also something of a dramatist, died in 1721, but the race is still kept up and keenly contested.

The Company of Watermen, which was always on a different footing from the other City Companies, being more particularly under the immediate jurisdiction of the Lord Mayor, was first officially constituted by a statute of the 2 and 3 Philip and Mary. This statute ordained that eight overseers were to be chosen from among the watermen, to keep order among the rest; and among the many regulations, was one determining that a wherry should not be less than twelve feet and a half long and four feet and a half broad in the midship, and sufficient to carry two persons on one side right, under the penalty of forfeiture. The Court of Aldermen was to assess the fares, and a waterman who demanded more was liable to suffer a year's imprisonment and forty shillings fine. Of these eight overseers, three were to be chosen by the lightermen. The court of assistants was to be composed of not less than forty or more than sixty watermen and nine lightermen. The said overseers were to appoint forty watermen to ply and work on Sundays, between Vauxhall and Limehouse, at seventeen stairs as should be judged most convenient. All barges and wherries were to be numbered and a table of fares given to each waterman. The legal fares varied according to distance, and above and below bridge: the usual fare being sixpence for a pair of oars and threepence for sculls; but to Lambeth and Vauxhall it was one

shilling, and to Chelsea, Battersea or Wandsworth, one shilling and sixpence. The fares for longer distances, of course, were higher; to Windsor or Staines, fourteen or twelve shillings; to Weybridge and Chertsey, ten shillings; and so on in proportion to the distance. An Act was passed in the second year of George II., 1729, for the better ordering and government of the waterman. Before this, in 1701, a very salutary order had been made, with regard to the language of the watermen, directing that, whilst rowing or working on the river anywhere between Windsor and Gravesend, they were to abstain from immodest and bad expressions, offensive to all sober persons, and tending to the corruption of youth. If convicted, they were to be fined. For all this, the watermen had a language of their own, and being quick-witted and ready-tongued, they would invariably come off best if any one were unwise enough to provoke a wordy encounter.

It will give some idea of the busy scene presented by the Thames in those bygone days, if we note that, in 1734, there were 5962 wherries registered and numbered, and above 1000 more unregistered, in addition to 1730 barges. Taylor, the water poet, tells us that in his time the number of watermen and those that lived or were maintained by them, and by the only labour of the oar and the scull, between Windsor and Gravesend, could not be less than forty thousand. This was in the reign of Elizabeth. In Anne's reign, Strype said that their number was about the same, so this represented a very considerable industry. When Blackfriars Bridge was built, the Watermen's Company accepted the sum of £13,650 as compensation for the loss of the Sunday ferry. Their old Hall before the Fire was at Cold Harbour, and faced the river; the present one is in Lower Thames Street. In Maitland's *London*, 1756, Watermen's Hall is still described as being in Dowgate Ward and at the bottom of Cold Harbour Lane, facing the river. The Thames steamboats, however, gave the death-blow to the Thames watermen, and though they still exist, there cannot be more than one in every hundred of those formerly plying their trade and giving life and animation to the river. Addison, in the *Spectator*, No. 383, gives us a charming sketch of the Thames waterman. He had promised to go by water to Spring Garden, Vauxhall, with Sir Roger de Coverley, and the worthy Knight calls for him, and they had no sooner come to the

Temple Stairs, than they were surrounded by a crowd of watermen offering them their services. Sir Roger, after having looked about him very attentively, spied one with a wooden leg and immediately gave him orders to get his boat ready. "As we were walking towards it, 'You must know,' says Sir Roger, 'that I never make use of anybody to row me, that has not lost a leg or an arm. I would rather bate him a few strokes of his oar, than not employ an honest man that has been wounded in the Queen's service. If I was a lord or a bishop and kept a barge, I would not put a fellow in my livery that had not a wooden leg.' After having seated himself and trimmed the boat with his coachman, who, being a very sober man, always serves for ballast, we made the best of our way to Vauxhall." Sir Roger gets out of the waterman the history of his right leg and hears that he had left it at La Hogue. The good knight, true to his habit of saluting everybody that passed him with a "good morrow" or "good night," let the usual phrase break from him as several boats passed; but to his great surprise two or three young fellows, instead of returning the civility, "asked us what queer old 'put' we had in the boat, and whether he was not ashamed of himself at his time of life," with a great deal of the like Thames ribaldry, which shocks the old man considerably. Of course, the gardens and some of its promenades shock him still more. After refreshing themselves with some burgundy and a slice of hung beef, the worthy knight sends the remainder to the one-legged waterman, so it must have exceeded in size and thickness the usual Vauxhall slice, and they return not altogether pleased with the excursion.

The watermen were not only quick at repartee, but also with their fists. Pepys records an instance. When that madcap Ferrers came to see him he brought a German with him, who performed well on the theorbo, and entertained them with his music; but a quarter of an hour after the two had left to return by boat from Tower Stairs, the German came back all in a "goare of blood," to tell Pepys that he was afraid the Captain had been killed by the watermen at the stairs. Pepys immediately started off to ascertain the truth, as, being known to most of the men plying there as one of their best customers, he would be told the rights of the case, and what had become of Captain Ferrers. He found that, as was commonly the case, the watermen had pressed upon them

roughly, each anxious for the fare. Ferrers, not liking it, had struck one with his cane, which naturally led to a row and a fight. Then the German had drawn his sword and run at them; whereupon they had both been soundly beaten, and the feathers in the Captain's hat carried off in triumph. The Captain got off to the hoy minus his plumes. Pepys recovers the feathers, which had been taken to an alehouse close by, and sends them to Ferrers by a messenger. He then returns home, and finds his wife dressing the German's head and plaistering his wounds; and, as his cravat had been torn in the affray, gives him one of his own, and five shillings for his purse, and sends him off. A lesson to them both that the Thames watermen were not men to be trifled with, or to let cold steel be drawn on them.

Frequent references have been made already to the various places of amusement on the banks of the river. It would be long and tedious to give a detailed history of each of the places to which our forefathers were wont to resort. In these days of music-halls, with their short turns, music, and lights, and such brilliant illuminations as at Earl's Court, the entertainment provided at these old pleasure places would be considered dull and dingy in the extreme. Not so then. Vauxhall and Ranelagh were looked upon as the very epitomé of all that was brilliant and gay; where bright eyes looked all the brighter for the soft illumination of the oil lamps, and rippling laughter made the formal groves and avenues re-echo with the sound of "revelry by night;" and when music arose with its voluptuous swell, nothing seemed to their minds wanting to make the place elysium. Below Bridge, the Cherry Garden at Redriff was much in vogue, though it was frequented more by the sober citizens than the courtiers. Above Bridge were the Bull and the Swan and Globe, of which mention has already been made, and Paris Garden, which became afterwards a theatre; the name long survived in Paris Garden Stairs. Cuper's Garden was opposite Somerset House, and was once famous for its fireworks. It was named after Boyder Cuper, who had been gardener at Arundel House, and his influence with Thomas Earl of Arundel had obtained from him a quantity of broken fragments of antique marbles, left after the more perfect specimens had been selected which form now the famous collection at Oxford. With these fragments he decorated his garden,



THE RED HOUSE, BATTERSEA. From an oil painting in the collection of Mr. Gardner.



VIEW THROUGH AN ARCH OF WESTMINSTER BRIDGE, TAKEN DURING ITS ERECTION. From an engraving after Canaletto.



OLD WESTMINSTER BRIDGE. From an engraving after Samuel Scott.



OLD BLACKFRIARS BRIDGE. From an engraving after J. Farrington, R.A.

which eventually gained rather a notorious reputation : but it was not finally suppressed until 1753. Beaufoy's vinegar works afterwards occupied the site, before they were removed to Lambeth on the building of Waterloo Bridge, and the approach to it on the Surrey side now passes over this once favourite resort, which was more often than not called Cupid's Garden. One wonders now what became of the marble fragments of Greek and Roman antiquities. Are they still buried on the site, or burnt to make lime, or were they there when Messrs. Beaufoy built their works?

Vauxhall, so frequently mentioned, does not seem to have been in existence before Charles the Second's reign, and is often called Fox Hall by old writers. The first mention is in 1661, and from that time until 1712 it was quite a fashionable place of entertainment ; but it suffered a temporary eclipse until 1732, when a man of the name of Tyers took it and reopened it with an Italian *fête*. He had spent great sums of money on it, enlarging it and adding much to its attractions. Hogarth is said to have painted the decorations of some of the rooms, which were afterwards removed when they were pulled down ; and Roubilliac carved a statue of Handel. The chief attractions were the lights and the music, and there were a number of what we should call now side-shows. The gardens were long a favourite spot for nightingales. It long continued a very fashionable place of amusement, and the Royal family frequently visited it. Walpole, in his letters to Montague, gives a very graphic description of a night at Vauxhall : the hours then kept were very late, for it was nearly 3 a.m. before he got home. It died almost in our own times of inanition, and the whole site is now thickly covered with houses.

No less famous than Vauxhall Gardens were those of Ranelagh on the opposite side of the river. They occupied the grounds of a house built by Lord Ranelagh on the east side of Chelsea Hospital immediately adjoining ; and, for some time after their opening, proved rather a dangerous rival to Vauxhall, in drawing away the most fashionable supporters of the latter. Ranelagh had an advantage over Vauxhall, where enjoyment greatly depended on the weather : Ranelagh possessed a huge Rotunda, under cover of which its entertainments and concerts could always be attended in comfort. This Rotunda was really a fine

building in its way—185 feet in diameter, with a series of boxes for tea and supper parties round the interior, and over these a gallery. In the centre was a raised orchestra going up to the roof, which was arched, and sprang from this central orchestra to the outer wall, so that the orchestra was not only visible, but perfectly audible all round. It was well warmed in winter, and well lighted by innumerable brackets, sconces, and chandeliers, and when filled with company, in the days of hoops and powder, embroidered coats, vests, and bag wigs, must really have presented a very brilliant sight. The music was good, and there were frequent masquerades and other entertainments of a like character. Twice a week there were *ridottos*, the tickets for which were a guinea. Walpole, in his letters to Horace Mann, tells him of the opening night—May 23rd, 1742—when the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Duke of Cumberland, much nobility and much mob besides, were there. “There is a vast amphitheatre, finely gilt, painted, and illuminated, into which everybody who loves eating, drinking, staring, or crowding is admitted for one shilling.” Walpole seems to have preferred its rival, Vauxhall, for he says that the gardens there were pleasanter and you went by water; so you could to Ranelagh, but it was most easily accessible from Kensington, the court suburb, and you did not have to cross the Thames. Lord Ranelagh’s house was not pulled down, but formed part of the buildings. The Rotunda was in existence until the commencement of the last century, when an installation ball of the Knights of the Bath took place there in 1802. The site was afterwards acquired by Chelsea Hospital and now forms part of the grounds on the eastern side. The late hours at Vauxhall were often exceeded at Ranelagh, for it was three in the morning before the gardens were closed.

The great regatta which was held on the Thames in June, 1775, must have been a very fine sight. A newspaper account of it says that the river from London Bridge to the “Ship” at Millbank was covered with pleasure-boats and barges. Scaffolds were erected on the banks and on barges, and as much as half-a-guinea was asked for a seat. Twelve boats, each with two men, were to row from Westminster Bridge against the tide to London Bridge and back, and the first boat which passed through the centre arch of Westminster Bridge westward

was the winner. The boats were divided into three squadrons—red, white, and blue. The first prize was a new boat with furniture complete, and an ensign with the word “Regatta” in gilt, and coats and badges. The second prize was eight guineas; and the third, three; and every other candidate, half-a-guinea. The red division won it. The Lord Mayor’s barge and all the city barges were crowded with well-dressed company, who mostly adopted the colours of the divisions. After the race, which was over about 8.30 p.m., a grand procession of boats was formed to Ranelagh, with band after band of music on board. At Ranelagh a grand fête took place, and a special octagon building called the Temple of Neptune was erected for dancing. The Rotunda, which was splendidly illuminated both inside and out, had been converted into a gigantic supper-room; but the supper was indifferent and the wine very scarce. The notorious Mrs. Cornely had the management of this. The music, performed by an orchestra of 240 performers led by Giardini, was under the general directorship of Mr. Simpson. The company afterwards danced minuets, cotillions, &c., in the Temple. Such was the crowd when the assembly broke up in the early hours of the morning, that there were many accidents, and four persons were drowned. It is said that never before had the Thames presented such an extraordinary sight, and the number of spectators was estimated at 200,000.

Chelsea had besides Ranelagh one or two other places of popular resort—Don Saltero’s and the Old Chelsea Bun House; and later came Cremorne, once famous for its fireworks, a popular entertainment there being a representation of the bombardment of Gibraltar, with a discharge of rockets on to the gardens from steamboats in the river. Battersea, on the opposite shore, was still almost given up to market-gardeners. The old church close to the water’s edge had been rebuilt and a copper spire added. The old house of Lord Bolingbroke close to the church towards the end of the eighteenth century was partly pulled down, and a curious horizontal windmill was erected on part of the grounds; it was a most curious object from the river. This and two other old windmills, and the famous Red House on the river-bank, were for long familiar landmarks. The Red House, a place of entertainment, was celebrated for its pigeon matches, shooting galleries, &c., and was much patronised by

boating parties. It formed a very picturesque and pleasing object on the bank, and has been often painted and sketched by artists.

One more place of public entertainment has not yet been noticed, although prominent enough, as it was actually on the river itself and not on its banks; it was known by the name of "The Folly," and is shown in our illustration of Old Somerset House. Outwardly it had the appearance of an immense house-boat and was built on a large barge, square-ended both at bow and stern, and had four square turrets, one at each angle and one in the centre of the flat roof, which formed a sort of promenade deck with wooden balustrades all round, the entrances being at the ends. It was first named "The Royal Diversion," and was originally anchored in the river over against Whitehall, and the term "Royal" applied to it refers to a visit paid by Queen Mary II., wife of William of Orange, and her attendant ladies; but it was afterwards moored further down the river opposite Somerset House. During the winter it was laid up by Cupid's or Cuper's Gardens. Whatever might have been the character of the original entertainment provided here when honoured by royalty, it very soon degenerated, and quite early in the reign of Anne it had become disreputable, being frequented by the dissolute and depraved of both sexes, a mere dancing saloon, and was finally chopped up for firewood.

It will be seen from the proximity of these places to the riverside that the watermen were rarely in want of a fare in those days; but times were coming which seriously interfered with their calling. Hackney coaches perhaps were the first cause of this declension. Then came the new bridges over the river. First, Westminster, then Blackfriars, and afterwards Waterloo, Hungerford, and Vauxhall, and, as a final *coup de grace*, came the steamboats, the first of which appeared in 1815. For several years they plied only below bridge, but in 1830 the *Endeavour* began to run up to Richmond, and soon a swarm began to ply between the bridges. This led to the gradual removal of the various stairs. In looking at old maps one sees how very numerous they were, and at what a number of places, both above and below bridge, one could land. Besides those which were public stairs, many of the old riverside taverns had their private stairs, which added much to their picturesque appearance from the river. Some of the old views of these



NEW AND OLD LONDON BRIDGES, From a painting by G. B. More in the collection of Mr. Goring.

taverns about Wapping show them, and one can understand the amount of smuggling which took place on a dark or foggy night, from the ships moored in the upper and lower Pool, and also the robberies from their cargoes, the Thames Police being yet in its infancy.

Here is a list of public stairs in use at the commencement of the eighteenth century, about 1707 :—

On the London side of the river, going up stream, the following stairs came in order : The Old Swan, Coleharbour, The Steel Yard, Dowgate, Three Cranes, Queenhithe, Trig, Paul's Wharf, Common Stairs, or Puddle Dock, Black Friars, Dorset, White Friars, Temple, Essex, Arundel, Surrey, Strand, Somerset, Savoy, Worcester, Salisbury, Ivybridge, Exchange, York, Black Lion, Hungerford, Whitehall, Privy Garden, Manchester, Westminster Bridge, Parliament, Horse Ferry, Ranelagh, Hospital, Bishop, Old Magpie, Feathers, Old Church, Beaufort.

Going through the bridge, still on the London side : Billingsgate, Sabbs, Custom House, Tower, Irongate, St. Catherine's, Ship, Brew House, Hermitage, Wapping Old, Wapping New, Execution Dock, Wapping Dock, King Edward's, New Crane, King James's, Shadwell, Bell Wharf, Ratcliff Cross, Limehouse, Dick's or Duke's Shore—probably derived from Ducks' shore, from the wild fowl.

Crossing over to the Surrey side above bridge : Pepper Alley, St. Saviour's, Bank End, Horseshoe Alley, New Thames Street, Mold Strand, Falcon, Paris Garden, Marygold, Bull, Old Barge House, Morris's Causeway, Cupid's or Cuper's, King's Arms, Stangate, Lambeth Palace, Horse Ferry, Vauxhall.

Going down through the bridge on the Surrey side were : Tooley, Battle, Bridge, Pickle Herring, Still, Old, New, Savory's Mill, East Lane, Three Mariners, Fountain, Mill, Rotherhithe or Redriff, Cherry Garden, King, Elephant, Church, Swan, Globe, Shepherd and Dock, Pageant, and about nine or ten more until Deptford and Greenwich are reached.

Comparing this list with those marked on John Rocque's map, 1746, and then again with Maitland, 1756, one notes a diminution in each, although slight, and many of them were renamed. For the purposes of comparison, let us take the year 1856, when we find on the north bank only thirty-four, and on the south side twenty-five, although, in consequence of the building of the new bridges over the

river, and the docks, eleven had been added on the north side, and seven on the south. Nearly all the new bridges had been built with stairs at both ends, and generally on both sides. Forty-eight stairs had in all disappeared. Many of those then remaining had been converted into steamboat piers. Since the Embankment has been constructed many more have gone, so that the final extinction of "the jolly young waterman" seems imminent.

CHAPTER VI.

PROCESSIONS, FROST FAIRS, AND FIRES.

The Lord Mayor's Procession—Nelson's Funeral—The Allied Sovereigns—The Opening of London Bridge—Burning of the Houses of Parliament—Docks—Tunnel—Tower Bridge—Frost Fairs—Tempests—Fires—High Tides—Pollution of the River—Swans—Seagulls—Fish—Ministerial Dinner at Greenwich—Odd Fish in the River—Story of a Shark—A Real Whale—Picturesque Effects on the River—Retrospect—Conclusion.

TIME and space, like the stream we are considering, are hastening on, and there is still much to say, and, indeed, much that must be left unsaid. In their proper and chronological order many of the gay processions and pageants on the river have already been described, and those only which have taken place during the last century remain to be noticed. The annual procession of the Lord Mayor by water was given up when the Conservancy of the Thames was taken away from the Corporation and vested in a Board. The barges belonging to the various City Companies were bought by the College boat clubs at Oxford, and are now moored in the river there. The removal of the Law Courts from Westminster to the Strand renders it almost impossible to revive this most picturesque feature of old London; but, before its final extinction, with that also of the various civic State barges, it enjoyed a long popularity since the Mayoralty of Sir John Norman in 1453.

There have been other processions by water of not the same joyous character. Anne of Bohemia, first wife of Richard II., and Queen Elizabeth, both died in the palace at Richmond, and their bodies were conveyed to Westminster by water, to be laid in the Abbey. The body of Nelson, the hero of Trafalgar, after lying in state at Greenwich Hospital, was brought, with all possible funereal pomp, up the river, through London to Westminster, and rested for a brief space at the

Admiralty before the sad procession on January 2nd, 1806, finally wended its way to St. Paul's, where the hero sleeps his last sleep.

A few years afterwards, on Monday, June 14th, 1814, the Prince Regent, accompanied by Alexander Emperor of Russia, the King of Prussia, Generals Blucher, Platoff, and a numerous suite, embarked from Whitehall Stairs on board the Admiralty barges, and proceeded down the river to Woolwich and returned the same way. This visit was paid in order that our illustrious guests might see the docks and shipping.

In 1831, on the 1st of August, their Majesties King William the Fourth and Queen Adelaide, attended by most of the Royal family, with the exception of H.R.H. the Duchess of Kent and Princess Victoria, came by water and opened the New London Bridge. The river on that occasion presented a most magnificent spectacle, and was crowded with State barges and innumerable boats; every place where a view could be obtained from the banks was filled with spectators, and the river was gay with bunting. There was a similar sight, for the last time, at the opening of the Coal Exchange, by Prince Albert, in 1849. When the Tower Bridge was opened in 1894 the State barges were missing from the display.

A stupendous spectacle seen from the river, but of a very different character from the last, was the burning of the Houses of Parliament on the 6th of October, 1834, when all that remained of the old Palace of Westminster, with the exception of the Great Hall and Cloisters and Sir John Soane's Law Courts, was entirely consumed by fire. The new palace was opened by Queen Victoria in 1847.

The formation of the various docks where ships could be moored and laden or unladen in safety made a vast difference to the appearance of the Pool. St. Katherine's, East and West India and London Docks, on the northern bank, and the Commercial, Grand Surrey, and Timber Docks, on the southern bank, nearly all date from the first years of the nineteenth century.

Although the river had now been bridged in so many places in its course through London, it was resolved to burrow beneath it, and make a tunnel which should connect Rotherhithe with Wapping. After many failures, from the river breaking in and drowning the works, it was thrown open to the public in 1843, a period of seventeen years having



BARGE OF KING WILLIAM IV AND QUEEN ADELAIDE PASSING SOMERSET HOUSE ON THE DAY OF THE OPENING OF LONDON BRIDGE.
From a coloured print after F. Calvert in the collection of Mr. Gardner.

elapsed since Brunel first started it in 1826. The construction of another tunnel since has changed its original destination and it now serves for a railway.

Another colossal work below bridge was the construction of the Tower Bridge, London's Watergate, which is such a prominent feature in the view of the river, and, with its lofty towers, adds much to its picturesqueness, although, by its close propinquity, it has rather dwarfed both the Tower of London and London Bridge.

Many a time has the river been fast locked in winter's icy grip. In olden time when its bed was much wider, ice would form at the sides, and as the frost increased, would extend from bank to bank. In 1063 it is recorded that it was frozen over for fourteen weeks, and again in 1076. In 1434 it was frozen over below London Bridge, as far down as Gravesend, and the frost lasted from November 24th to February 10th. In 1515 the ice on the river was strong enough to bear carriages, and many passed over between Lambeth and Westminster, but unfortunately it is not said what sort of carriages, for coaches did not come into use until a later date. In 1564 we first hear of all sorts of diversions on the frozen river, the first real Frost Fair, but very little is recorded of it. There can be little doubt that London Bridge, with its narrow arches and huge piers, contributed not a little to the frequent freezing of the river from bank to bank. Since the new bridge has been built such an occurrence has been less frequent. The floating ice was massed against these piers and heaped up on the starlings, and so formed a barrier, and the intervals between soon got frozen over.

On December 23rd, 1683, Evelyn describes "a greate frost." The Thames was frozen, and on the 1st of January the weather continuing intolerably severe, streets of booths were set upon the Thames. On the 6th the river was quite frozen over. On the 9th, Evelyn crossed the Thames on the ice, which had become so thick as to bear not only streets of booths in which they roasted meat, but there were divers shops of wares quite across as in a town, and coaches, carts, and horses passed over. He went from Westminster Stairs to Lambeth and dined with the Archbishop, and accompanied by Sir George Wheeler, walked back on the ice from Lambeth Stairs to the Horse Ferry. The frost continuing in severity, the Thames was filled with tents and people

selling all sorts of wares. He tells us that the booths were planted in formal rows like streets, and that not only were the shops full of all sorts of commodities, but various trades were carried on, particularly that of a printer, who set up a press where the people, and the ladies especially, took a fancy to have their names printed, and the day and the year set down when printed on the Thames. Many of these cards are to be found in the Gardner and Crace collections. This became so popular that the enterprising printer made 5*l.* a day for printing a line only, at 6*d.* a name, besides what he got by ballads, &c. Coaches plied on the ice from Westminster to the Temple, and from several other stairs to and fro as in the streets. Sleds, sliding with "skeetes," a bull baiting, horse and coach races, puppet plays and interludes, cooks, tippling and other lewd places, so that it seemed a bacchanalian triumph or carnival on the ice. This winter was so severe that trees were split by the frost, birds and fish perished, and many parks of deer were destroyed, and fuel so dear that there were great contributions to preserve the poor alive. London, by the excessive cold of the air hindering the ascent of the smoke, became so filled with it that one could hardly see across the streets, and it filled the lungs so that breathing was difficult. On the 5th of February it began to thaw, but froze again, and there being no water many trades, especially the brewers, had to stop. Evelyn crossed from Lambeth to the Horse Ferry at Millbank, but the thaw continuing, the booths had all to be taken down. He adds that there was a map or landscape cut in copper representing the scene, and all the sports and pastimes thereon. A sketch made by Thomas Wyck on the 4th of February is preserved in the British Museum, and is here reproduced. It is taken from near the Temple, and old London Bridge with its houses is visible in the distance. The following year in January the frost was very severe, and the Thames was frozen, but unsafe to venture upon.

The winter of 1739-40 was one of the most severe ever remembered, and from the long continuance of the frost from Christmas Day, 1739, to February 17th, 1740, when it began to thaw, but very gradually, it has been known ever since as the Great Frost. It was impossible for the colliers from the north to get up the river, and the distress among the poorer classes was terrible, not only from want of fuel, food and water, but also of work. The watermen and fishermen with a peter-boat in

mourning, and the carpenters, bricklayers, and labourers walked in procession through the streets soliciting the alms of the charitable, and to the honour of the city and all, great sums were collected and disbursed. Another terrible calamity happened a few days after the frost had commenced: this was a terrible gale which did incalculable damage in the river, dragging vessels from their moorings and dashing them against one another, while the large sheets of ice floating in the stream overwhelmed the wherries and lighters and barges, and sunk many, especially those laden with coal and corn. Above the bridge the Thames was frozen completely over and a Frost Fair was held on it. Various shops were opened for the sale of toys, cutlery, and other light articles. Printing presses were set up and the usual drinking booths and puppet shows abounded. All sorts of sports and diversions were carried on, and the place became a perfect carnival, as if the populace were utterly oblivious of the misery and distress which existed on shore.

In the beginning of the winters of 1767 and 1768 there were also severe frosts. The navigation of the river was completely stopped, while below bridge the damage done by the floating ice was enormous. Ships, barges, and small craft were driven hither and thither; many were sunk and driven on shore, and a great number of human lives were sacrificed.

Some time before this Westminster Bridge had been built, being then the only one besides London Bridge, which at last had been cleared of its houses and considerably repaired in 1757-58. The handsome old bridge of Blackfriars, the work of Robert Mylne, was opened in 1769; Southwark Bridge, by John Rennie, was opened in 1819; and Waterloo—or, as it was first called, the Strand Bridge—in 1817.

On the 26th of November, 1703, there was a great hurricane. All the ships in the river, from London Bridge to Limehouse, with the exception of four only, were broken from their moorings and thrown on shore. Upwards of four hundred wherries were entirely lost, more than sixty barges were driven foul of London Bridge, and as many more were either sunk or staved above bridge. The loss of life was also very considerable. On the 1st of January, 1730, there was such a dense fog that it caused numerous deaths and fatalities from collisions among the shipping.

On the 25th of November, 1788, another great frost occurred which again lasted seven weeks. The river was completely frozen over above and below bridge, and the usual Frost Fair took place, which this time included a wild beast show. The thaw setting in suddenly threw everything into the greatest confusion, and the immense blocks of ice floating on the surface made it necessary to moor the ships close in, and yet many broke away from the pressure. One vessel off Rotherhithe was partly fastened to the main beams of a house, and, such was the enormous pressure of the ice, that the whole building collapsed, and unhappily five persons who were asleep in their beds perished.

In February, 1791, there was an extraordinary high tide, and all the low-lying districts on the Surrey side were flooded; Bankside and Tooley Street were under water, and, on the City side, Queenhithe, Thames Street, and Wapping High Street were in a like condition. Palace Yard was flooded two feet deep, and boats rowed from the Thames to Westminster Hall.

In December, 1793, a terrible fire broke out at Hawley's Wharf, near Hermitage Wharf, Wapping, which entirely destroyed that and several neighbouring properties, three vessels, and other small craft that were lying in the dock; 1400 casks of sugar were melted by the intense heat into one mass, which flowed through the streets and into the river one bright stream of liquid fire. This conflagration resembled in many respects the larger fire in recent years at Cotton's Wharf, Tooley Street, where the floating masses of burning tallow carried the fire to ships moored in the stream. In July, 1794, nearly the whole of Ratcliff was destroyed and several vessels in the river alongside. It was occasioned by the boiling over of a pitch kettle at a boat-builder's yard. This disastrous fire was considered to have been the worst experienced since the Great Fire of London for the number of houses burnt.

In 1814, during the month of January, there had been a very severe frost, but, a thaw having taken place, the spectacle on the Thames at London Bridge was extraordinary. At the ebbing of the tide, huge fragments of ice were carried down the stream with great violence, accompanied by a noise equal to the report of a small piece of artillery. On the return of the tide they were forced back again, but the obstacle opposed to their progress through the arches was so great as to threaten



THE FROST FAIR OF 1814. From a drawing in the collection of Mr. Gardiner.

a total stoppage of the navigation. A few days after—on the 1st of February—the Thames between Blackfriars and London Bridges continued to “present the novel scene of persons moving on the ice in all directions and in great numbers.” The ice, however, from its roughness and inequalities, was totally unfit for amusement, although several booths were erected on it for the sale of small wares, but the publicans and spirit dealers were most in request. The whole of the river opposite Queenhithe was completely frozen, but the ice varied in thickness, and nearer Blackfriars was absolutely dangerous. This state of the river continued until the 7th, when the mass of ice broke up through high tides. People were crossing to and fro even up to the last, but at 4 p.m. it gave way and swept through the arches of Blackfriars Bridge, carrying along with it innumerable boats and about forty barges; but the erections for the new Strand Bridge, afterwards called Waterloo, impeded its progress, and it was some time before the passage became free. Many people who were foolhardy enough to remain in the booths until a late hour at night found, to their alarm, that the solid mass on which they stood began to move; they managed to scramble into two derelict barges, and one managed to pass safely through Blackfriars Bridge, but the other struck against one of the piers, and ropes had to be let down from the bridge to rescue this involuntary crew.

A few days after this, on the 12th, Sir Christopher Wren’s Custom House was burnt down and unfortunately a number of warehouses, private houses, and inns. An explosion of gunpowder scattered terror and dismay in the very height of the conflagration, and paralysed for a time all attempts to subdue the flames. The loss to the Government was immense, and to private owners also.

During the long course of ages, London in its constant growth had been systematically polluting the beautiful river by pouring into it its sewage and converting it into one huge sewer. This horrible custom had commenced in very early days and had gone on steadily increasing. Pope, Swift, and Gay alluded to it, and particularly to the state of the Fleet ditch—

“where Fleet ditch with disemboguing streams,
Rolls its large tribute of dead dogs to Thames.”

The stench arising from the mud-banks at low water and their disgusting appearance were long a standing reproach to London. It was no wonder that the river, which had been once famous for its fish, was almost deserted by them, and the fishermen petitioned Parliament on the utter extinction of their industry and prayed for relief ; but it was many years before the authorities woke up to facts which were patent to all. At last the Metropolitan Main Drainage Act was passed, and the first stone of the Victoria Embankment laid in July, 1864. The new scheme, however, only removed the nuisance from one part of the river to a point further down at Crossness, and with the enormous increase of London since this Act was passed the scheme is now inadequate, and in a few years will have to be supplemented and improved.

The swans which in the old days were common enough on the river almost ceased to come down between the bridges : they objected to the risk of sullyng their snow-white plumage in the inky waters. Of late years—indeed one might almost say quite recently—another kind of water-fowl has become quite familiar to Londoners, the sea-gulls. In the winter months flocks of these can now be seen constantly on the wing skimming over the face of the river, and so tame and fearless have they become that, like the sparrows, they will take food almost from the hand, and people may constantly be seen feeding them.

The fish formerly caught in the river above and below bridge were sturgeon, occasionally salmon, salmon-trout, trout, tench, barbel, roach, dace, chub, bream, gudgeon, ruffe, smelts, eels and flounders, and last and not least, that puzzle to the naturalist, whitebait. The Ship Tavern at Greenwich was long famous for the ministerial dinner which was held there and marked the end of the Parliamentary Session. It generally took place in August, but fell into disuse until revived for a time by Lord Beaconsfield, and has now again been dropped.

Billingsgate for many ages has been the great mart for fish. There was a natural haven here not unlike Queenhithe, but not so large, at which boats could unload. Its derivation from Belin's Gate is correct enough, but the building of the gate by "King Belin" is of course purely mythical. Originally it was not exclusively used for fish, but as a general wharf for small trading vessels, but the Fishmongers' Company, which included the Stockfishmongers, had their Hall in the neighbour-

hood and gradually absorbed the trade. The Old Fishmarket was in Old Fish Street. It was long famous for its fish dinners, and was a favourite resort of the citizens. Moored just off Billingsgate one still sees the Dutch eel-boats.

Strange fish are sometimes found in the river ; porpoises are not unfrequent, and even a small whale has been imprudent enough to try to ascend. But on the 1st of January, 1787, the strangest take of all is recorded. Some fishermen fishing off Poplar with much difficulty drew into their boat a shark ; alive, but apparently very sickly. When it was taken on shore and opened, they found in the inside a silver watch, a metal chain, and a cornelian seal, with some fragments of gold lace, supposed to have belonged to somebody who had unfortunately fallen overboard. The rest of the body had been digested, but these articles remained, and were perhaps the cause of the sickness of the fish, from which, and from the effects of the Thames water, it would doubtless have died. The watch bore the name of Henry Warson, London, and the number 1369, and the works were very much impaired. When these particulars were published Henry Warson recollected that he had sold a watch to a Mr. Ephraim Thompson of Whitechapel as a present to his son going on his first voyage on board the ship *Polly*, Captain Vane, bound for abroad. About three leagues off Falmouth, through a sudden heel of the vessel during a squall, young Thompson fell overboard and was no more seen. The news of his being drowned reached his family, who little thought that they would ever hear of him again. Mr. Thompson, senior, bought the shark, not for the sake of having it buried in consecrated ground, but to preserve it as a memorial of so singular an event. It was the largest shark ever remembered to have been taken in the Thames, being from the tip of the snout to the extremity of the tail 9 feet 3 inches ; from the shoulder to the extremity of the body, 6 feet 1 inch ; round the body in the thickest part, 6 feet 9 inches ; the width of the jaws when extended, 17 inches ; it had five rows of teeth, and from that circumstance was supposed to have been five years old. This extraordinary account appears in the *Annual Register* of 1787, under the head of "Chronicle," page 227.

A large specimen of the true or Greenland Whale was caught off Greenwich, June 3rd, 1658. Evelyn describes it thus (Bray & Wheatley's

Edition, vol. 2, page 101): "A large whale was taken betwixt my land butting on the Thames and Greenewich which drew an infinite concourse to see it, from London and all parts. It appear'd first below Greenewich at low water, for at high water he would have destroyed all y^e boats, but lying now in shallow water incompass'd with boates, after a long conflict it was killed with a harping iron struck in y^e head, out of which spouted blood and water by two tunnells, and after a horrid grone it ran quite on shore and died. It length was 58 foote, heighth 16; black skinned like coach leather, very small eyes, greate taile, onely two small finns, a picked snout, and a mouth so wide that divers men might have stood upright in it, no teeth, and a throate yet so narrow as would not have admitted the least of fishes." The wind had been northerly near six months. Others have been caught from time to time, smaller and not the true whale.

Exquisite are the effects which one sees on this noble river at sunrise or sunset. The very mistiness of the atmosphere lends an enchantment to the view. No wonder that poets have sung its praises, and painters loved it. What sight in the world can be finer than that from the Bridge at Westminster as we stand close to the statue of that Boadicea who in the far-gone days burnt this Roman City of Londinium. If we could only forget the unsightly railway bridge and terminus and look rather at the splendid embankment, fringed with green, which now replaces the hideous mud-banks of our youth, we could say with truth and justice that it is indeed a fair city to look upon. In the old days the Palace of Whitehall, the stately town houses of the nobility embosomed in trees and with gardens coming down to the water's edge, the distant view of the picturesque city, with its vast gothic Cathedral towering high above the roofs, must truly have been a very beautiful sight, but not more beautiful than this. On the opposite bank the houses were few and far between, and the flatness of the landscape was unrelieved. But now in these days that bank, with its factories and huge warehouses, its wharfs and barges moored alongside, the lofty shot towers, mean in detail but lovely in effect, serves but as a foil and foreground to the view beyond. Let the eye travel round the curve and rest on the noble bridge at Waterloo, the river front of Somerset House, the



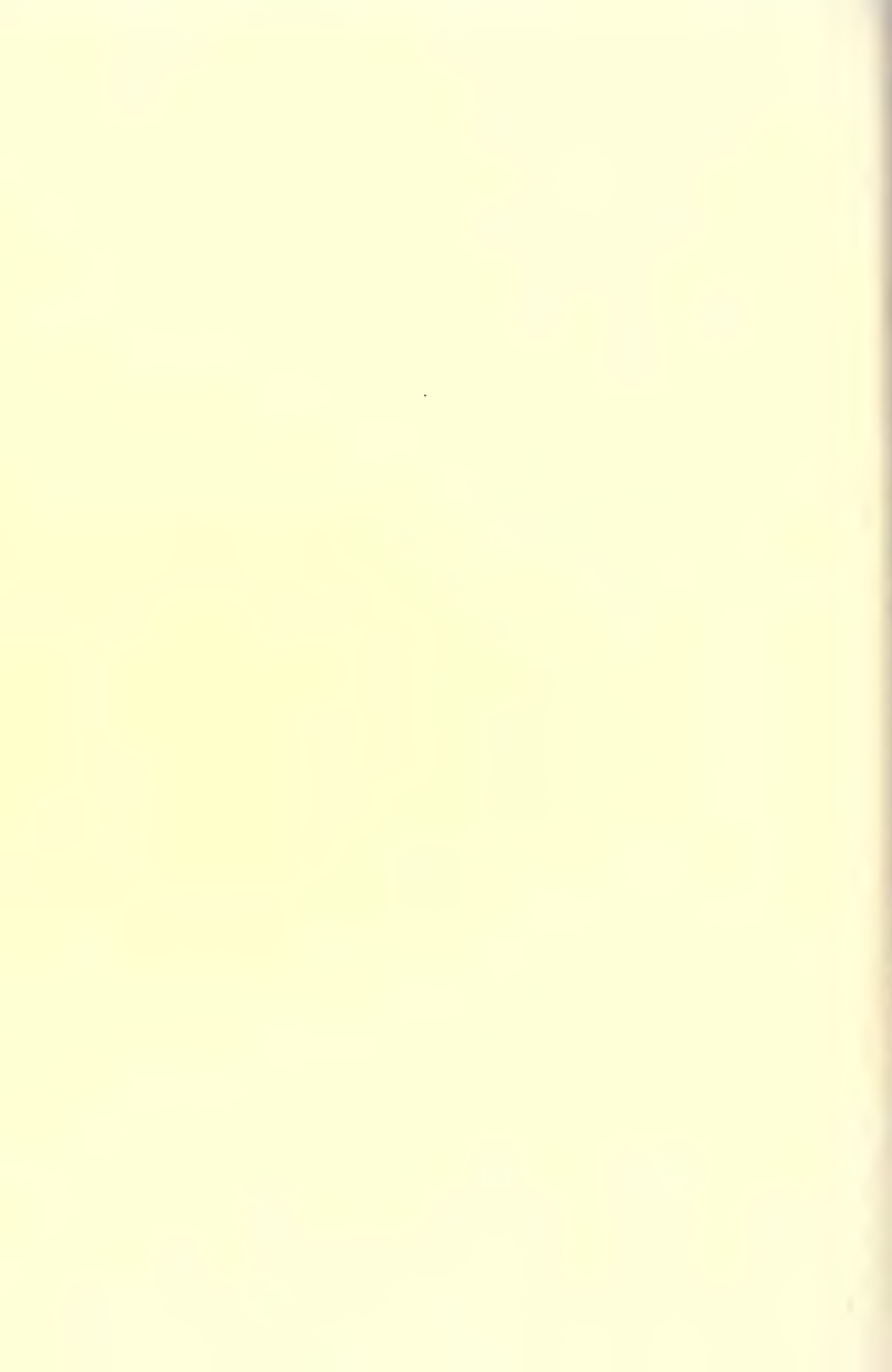
THE LORD MAYOR'S SHOW AT WESTMINSTER BRIDGE. *From an engraving after David Roberts, R.A.*



THE HALF MOON AND THE SHIP, SHADWELL. *From a drawing by J. P. Emslie, in the collection of Mr. Gardner.*



THE FROST FAIR OF 1789. *From a print.*





THE FROST FAIR OF 1684. *From a drawing by T. Wyck. British Museum.*



BILLINGSGATE. From a drawing in the collection of Mr. Gardner.

foliage of the Embankment Gardens, the old-world Temple, with its lawns and trees, and look beyond at the view of that wondrously beautiful dome, lifting high above the city its golden cross, until the dim outline of the Tower Bridge closes the view. Then let us cross Westminster bridge, and as the sun is sinking in the west, gaze at that fairy palace rising in shadow from the water's edge, with its pinnacles and spires, its colossal Victoria Tower, and the niches and statues "in whose folded sleeves birds build their nests," the glorious successor of the old Palace of our Saxon, Norman, Plantagenet, and Tudor Kings. The long river front of St. Thomas' Hospital is lighted up by the rays of the setting sun which deepen the colour of the red brick and gild the stone dressings, and make every window a flame of glory. Below it are the lines of the Albert Embankment, and beyond are the towers of Lambeth Palace. Is it not a wonderfully beautiful sight?

But what of the river? It looks silent and deserted, although its waters are rolling on like molten gold. The wherries and boats which used to ply on its surface have long gone. The steamboats, with their crowded decks, have gone also. Nothing is stirring on the tideway but a wretched tug, which hoots from time to time like some horrid monster in distress, and tows a long train of half-submerged barges. If we are fortunate, we may see some barge from the Medway, with its light-green hulk and deep rich brown sail, the only spot of colour left upon the bosom of the flowing Thames.

What changes, what scenes in the drama of human life, has this old river seen, as various as the shifting disc of a kaleidoscope; and still it glides on its unchanging course, as if the mighty city were but flotsam and jetsam on its banks, passed unregarding by its stream, as the waters gathered from pleasant valleys and wooded hills above, hasten towards the bosom of all-embracing ocean. And what changes it may yet see! The day predicted by Macaulay may be yet far distant when the New Zealander is to sit upon the ruined arch of London Bridge; and one has hopes for the future of this beautiful city, when the river, so silent and deserted now, may again become a popular highway, and the old wherries and Citizen steamboats be replaced by speedier vessels, whether propelled by steam or electricity, from which one may once more enjoy the view of the rapidly changing city on its banks. The

turbid stream itself as it flows backwards or forwards, with the changing tide, will be a purer one, and no longer a receptacle for filth. If the seat of government were ever removed, as was once threatened by a Stuart monarch, London would still have the commerce which its river brings, for Cowper's words, written more than a hundred years ago, are still true :—

“ Where has Commerce such a mart,
So rich, so thronged, so drained and so supplied,
As London? opulent, enlarg'd, and still
Increasing London.”

INDEX.

Adelphi, The, 33
 Alfred, King, 8, 10
 All Hallows, Barking, 27, 51
 Ambassadors, Reception of, 45, 46
 Anne, Queen, 60, 66
 Anne of Denmark, Queen of James I., 39
 Arundel House, 28, 72

Bacon, Francis, 33
 Bankside, 42, 49
 Banqueting House, Whitehall, 45, 63
 Barges, State, 45, 67, 79
 Battersea, 17, 79
 Baynards Castle, 13, 26
 Bear-baiting, 38, 42
 Beaufort Buildings, 31
 Becket, Archbishop, 14
 Bedford House, 30
 Billingsgate, 26, 86
 Bishops, The Seven, Trial of, 60
 Bishops Inns and Palaces, 13-28
 Blackfriars, 13, 27
 Boleyn, Anne, 57
 Boniface, Archbishop, 21
 Boswell, James, 55
 Bridewell, 13, 27
 Bridge Gate, 5
 Buckingham Street, 33
 Burgh, Hubert de, 34

Canute, 8, 9
 Carlisle House, 30
 Caroline of Anspach, 64
 Catherine of Aragon, 27, 57
 Catherine of Braganza, 39, 40, 45, 60
 Cecil House, 31
 Charles II., 44, 45, 51, 55, 59, 60
 Chelsea, 37, 59, 75
 Chester's Inn, 28,
 Churches, 22, 23, 26
 Coal Tax, The, 52
 Coldharbour, 32
 Cotton Garden, 36
 Coventry, Lord Keeper, 33
 Cuper's Garden, 72
 Custom House, The, 26, 64, 85

Danes, The, 8, 10
 Denmark House, 39
 Deptford, 26
 Docks, 80
 Doggett's Coat and Badge, 69
 Durham House, 31, 33

Dutch, The, in the Thames, 56

Edgar Atheling, 11, 12
 Edward the Confessor, 9, 10
 Edward I., 23
 Edward II., 23
 Edward III., 23, 29
 Edward IV., 57
 Edward VI., 30, 32, 57
 Eleanor, Queen of Henry III., 20, 29
 Elizabeth, Queen, 32, 39, 57
 Essex House, 28
 Evelyn, 31, 36, 44, 49, 53, 55, 62
 Execution Dock, 65
 Exeter House, 28

Ferrers, Captain, 72
 Fires, 18, 54, 80, 84, 85 ; The Great Fire of
 London, 49
 Fishing, 82
 Fishmongers' Hall, 64.
 Fitzstephen, 12, 14
 Fleet River, The, 13, 27
 Folly, The, 76
 Frosts, Great, 81.

George I., 67, 68
 Greenwich, 56
 Grey, Walter de, Archbishop of York, 34

Hadrian, 6, 7
 Handel, 64.
 Hatfield, Thomas de, Bishop of Durham, 31
 Harold Harefoot, 10
 Heath, Archbishop of York, 33
 Henrietta Maria, Queen, 39, 56
 Henry I., 16
 Henry III., 20
 Henry IV., 24, 31, 57.
 Henry V., 24, 57
 Henry VI., 25, 61
 Henry VII., 27, 30, 57
 Henry VIII., 27, 32, 35, 38, 57
 Herbert, Philip, fourth Earl of Pembroke, 33
 Horseferry, The, 37, 81
 Hospitallers, The, 23
 Houses of Parliament, Burning of the, 81
 Howard, Henry, Earl of Northampton, 34
 Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, 51

Isabella, Queen of Richard II., 24

James I., 32, 58

INDEX.

- James II., 31, 55, 60, 61
 Jefferies, Judge, 65
 John, King, 18
 John of Gaunt, 18, 29
 Jones, Inigo, 34, 39, 63
 Juxon, Archbishop, 59
- Lambeth Palace, 37, 58
 London Bridges :—The first bridge, 4, 6,
 8, 10, 16; the second bridge (Old
 London Bridge), 16, 17, 24, 53, 64;
 New London Bridge, 80
 Lord Mayor's Procession, 79
 Mary I., 33, 57
 Mary II., 62, 63
 Mary Beatrice of Modena, 39, 60
 Matthew, Tobias, Archbishop of York, 32,
 Milford Lane, 28
 Montfichet Tower, 13
 More, Sir Thomas, 38
- Neate, Manor of, 37
 Nelson's Funeral, 79
 Norfolk, John Mowbray, second Duke of, 54
 Northumberland House, 34
- Osborn, Sir Edward, Story of, 54
- Padua, John of, 38
 Pageants and Processions, 24, 46, 61, 68,
 79, 80
 Parr, Catherine, 38
 Pepys, 42, 45, 46, 49, 59, 71
 Percy, Algernon, tenth Earl of Northumber-
 land, 34
 Peter of Colechurch, 16
 Plague, The Great, 49
 Pleasure Gardens, 72
 Portreeve, The, 23
 Putney, 35
- Queenhith, 5, 22
- Raleigh, Sir Walter, 32
 Ranelagh, 73
 Red House, The, Battersea, 75
 Regattas on the Thames, 55, 74
 Richard II., 24
 Romans, The, 3-7
 Rotherhithe, 17
 Royal Palaces, 56, 63
- St. Clement Danes, 10
 St. Dunstan's in the East, 10, 27
 St. Lawrence Pountney, 40
- St. Mary-le-Strand, 30
 St. Mary Overie, 13, 18
 St. Paul's Cathedral, 4, 9, 13
 St. Thomas Acons, Lombard Street,
 St. Thomas, Chapel of, London Bridge, 17
 Salisbury House, 31
 Savoy, The, 29
 Saxons, The, 7
 Somerset, Lord Protector, 29, 38
 Somerset House, 29, 38-41, 64
 Southwark, 5, 13, 18, 54
 Southwark Bridge, 83
 Sports, River, 15, 16, 74
 Stairs, Riverside, 36, 65, 76
 Stapylton, Bishop of Exeter, 28
 Stationers' Company, 67
 Steamboats, 70, 76
 Sweyn, 8
- Templars, The, 23
 Temple, The, 21, 25, 28
 Thames, Etymology of, 2
 Thames Tunnel, 80
 Theatres, 41
 Three Cranes Wharf, 22
 Tides, High, 19, 84
 Tower, The, of London, 12, 13, 20, 23, 26,
 65, 68
 Tower Bridge, The, 80
 Tunstall, Cuthbert, Bishop of Durham, 32
- Vauxhall, 59, 73
 Villiers, George, Duke of Buckingham, 33
 Vintners' Wharf, 22
- Wapping, 64
 Water House, The, at London Bridge, 53
 Waterloo Bridge, 83
 Watermen, Thames, 42, 67, 69
 Westminster, 22
 Westminster Abbey, 12, 14, 21
 Westminster Bridge, 84
 Westminster Palace, 14, 19, 24, 34, 36
 White Tower, The, 12, 13, 20
 Whitehall, 33-35, 45-64
 William I., 11
 William II., 14
 William III., 40, 58, 61
 William IV., 80
 Wolsey, Cardinal, 34
 Worcester House, 31
 Wren, Sir Christopher, 53, 58, 59
- York House, 33
 York Place, Whitehall, 34, 35

1594

